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**OCCIDENTALISM**  
**IN LATE NINETEENTH CENTURY**  
**EGYPT**

A Thesis

Presented to the Faculty  
of the Graduate Center for Social and Public Policy  
McAnulty College and Graduate School of Liberal Arts

Duquesne University

in partial fulfillment of

the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

by

Alaa Bayoumi

28 June 2005



**Thesis Signature Page**

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Occidentalism in Late Nineteenth Century Egypt

Masters of Arts

Thesis

28 June 2005

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**To my mother Samira,  
my wife Doaa,  
my sister Nermin,  
and my daughter Noor**

### **Acknowledgment**

First, I want to thank my first reader Dr. Evan Stoddard, Ph.D., Associate Dean, McAnulty College and Graduate School of Liberal Arts, for all his help and support. Without Dr. Stoddard's academic advice and personal support and encouragement I could not have completed my thesis. My interactions with Dr. Stoddard during my school years at Duquesne and during the long process of completing my thesis have always been a source of pleasure and comfort for me. Such interactions have also greatly shaped my perception of the kind of positive relationship that can exist between an Easterner, like my self, and an American. I will always remember Dr. Stoddard as a friend and as a father figure in my life.

I would also like to thank my second reader, Dr. Moni McIntyre, Assistant Professor, Graduate Center for Social and Public Policy, for her invaluable academic contributions to my thesis and for leading me to highlight the policy implications of my thesis in a way that I did not expect before. I was also encouraged during my thesis presentation by Dr. McIntyre's welcoming and supportive attitude.

I also owe a lot of gratitude to Dr. Richard A. Colignon, Ph.D., Professor and Director Graduate Center for Social and Public Policy, for leading me through the methodological aspects of my thesis. Dr. Colignon's advice to learn about Orientalism and to use its approach to study Occidentalism has greatly transformed my methodology and my understanding of Occidentalism. In addition, Dr. Colignon's insights have been a source of enlightenment throughout the process of completing my thesis.

Finally, I would like to thank all my teachers and colleagues at Duquesne. The two years that I spent at Duquesne have been the best in my life so far. I will always be indebted to Duquesne.

### **Abstract**

This thesis analyzes the Occidental discourses of three intellectual leaders of late nineteenth century Egypt, Jamal al-Din al-Afghani, Qasim Amin, and Abd al-Rahman al-Kawakibi. It highlights four main factors that shaped the three writers' views of the West. These factors are: the way each writer saw reform as a process, the way each writer viewed the effects of Western foreign policies on the Muslim world, and the attitudes of each writer toward Muslim governments and toward the socially conservative Muslim masses. At the policy level, the study argues that any policy seeking to reform Arabs' perceptions of the US and the West should simultaneously attempt to promote democracy in Muslim societies, to reform Western foreign policies toward the Muslim world, to educate Muslims about the social and moral values of the West, and to spread a view of reform as a gradual, educational, and nonviolent process.



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## **Chapter 1**

### **Introduction**

In the years following the tragic events of September 11, 2001, American media, public, and policy makers paid unprecedented attention to the way Arabs view America and the West, Arab Occidentalism. As a result, two main approaches crystallized to explain the nature and root causes of Arabs' Occidental views and how such perceptions could be improved.

The first theory was that Arabs' views of America and the West are encrypted in the Arab culture in general and in the Muslim religion in particular. It also posited that Arabs' negative views of the West reflect the gloomy circumstances of Arab societies and scapegoat the West and its foreign policies for those circumstances. As a result, advocates of this theory argued that America and the West don't have to change their current foreign policies in order to improve their image in the Arab world. Instead, they urged the West to focus its efforts on pressuring Arab governments to reform the conditions of the Arab societies and on educating Arabs about the West, its values, civilization, and foreign policies.

On the contrary, the second theory saw American and Western foreign policies as the main cause of Arabs' anti-American and anti-Western perceptions, looked at current and future Western policies with suspicion, and urged America and the West not to intervene in the internal affairs of Arab societies because it regarded such intervention as the fundamental cause of Arabs' discontent with the West.

In response to this debate, the current study intends to contribute to the general understanding of the nature and root causes of Arabs' views of America and the West by analyzing the Occidental discourses of three intellectual leaders of late nineteenth century Egypt, Jamal al-Din al-Afghani (1838-1897), Qasim Amin (1863-1908), and Abd al-Rahman al-Kawakibi (1854 – 1902). The Occidental views of these writers are important to our subject for at least four main reasons.

First, the three writers together constitute a group of three influential, diverse, and widely respected intellectual fathers of modern Arab thought and Occidentalism. The ideas of each of them helped lay the foundation for one or more of today's most dominant Arab ideologies, such as liberalism, Arab nationalism, and Islamism and for the way the followers of these ideologies see America and the West today.

Second, the Occidental discourses of the three writers reveal important details about the nature and root causes of Arab Occidentalism. In brief, they reveal that Arab Occidentalism is something more than an automatic reflection of Arabs' culture and internal circumstances or a mindless reaction to Western foreign policies toward the Arab world. Instead, they reflect Arabs' search for reform and awakening. Such search, the study argues, dominated the thinking of the three writers and led them to manipulate their knowledge about the West in unique ways revealed by the study.

Third, the Occidental perspectives of the three writers demonstrate that any serious effort to improve the image of the Occident in Arabs' eyes cannot depend only on fixing Western foreign policies or merely on reforming Arabs' circumstances and on teaching Arabs about the values of the West. However, such an approach should include

all three of those steps in addition to encouraging Arabs to seek reform in gradual, educational, and non-violent ways. This is because the Occidental discourses of the three writers show a clear connection, explained in detail later, between the spread of political, radical, and violent reform and the rise of anti-Western views.

Finally, the Occidental discourses of the three writers are uniform in their pronounced rejection of religion as the main basis of the conflict between the East and the West. In this regard, the study shows that the three writers belonged to a different era of modern Arabic thought, the late nineteenth century, when Arabs and Muslims were more willing to learn from the West and less worried about the threat posed by the West to their cultural and religious identities. This led Arab and Muslim intellectuals, such as the three writers studied here, to encourage their audience to learn from the West and to clearly state their beliefs that the conflict between the East and the West was more based on political and economic reasons than on religious and cultural ones. I believe that such views, if revived and promoted, should help reduce contemporary religious tensions between Easterners and Westerners.

In the rest of this introductory chapter, and before analyzing the Occidental discourses of the three writers in the following chapters, I will focus on highlighting the study's main argument and methodology.

### *1) Critique of Contemporary Debate on Arab Occidentalism*

The current debate about the nature and root causes of Arabs' contemporary views of America and the West, Arab Occidentalism, gained rising importance since the terrorist attacks on Washington, D.C., and New York on September 11, 2001, which demonstrated to the American people and government that their country enjoys a generally negative image in the Arab world, from which the 19 hijackers came. In response, the American administration, pressured by the need to win Arabs' support for the war on terrorism, launched several public diplomacy initiatives aiming to improve Arabs' perceptions of America in particular and the West in general (U.S. Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy 2002; Djerejian 2003; Blinken 2002; Tolson 2003). In addition, countless books, articles, and public opinion surveys were released seeking to explain the nature and root causes of Arabs' contemporary discontent with America and the West (Friedman 2002; Friedman 2004, Buruma and Margalit 2004; AbuKhalil 2004; Lewis 2003; Hirsh 2004; Huntington 2001, Warren 2004).

Although it may be difficult to draw generalizations about the main theoretical perspectives recently used to explain Arab Occidentalism in the American media and public circles, one can easily notice the influential presence of two contrasting approaches. The first approach is promoted by intellectuals who believe that Arabs' attitudes toward America and the West mainly reflect the cultures and circumstances of Arab and Muslim societies. Some of these intellectuals see Islam as a religion that holds deep animosity toward non-Muslims and that seeks to obtain the submission of all other religions, by force if necessary (Hollander 2002:15; Fradkin 2001:28; Rollins 2001:27).

They perceive Arab and Muslim societies as “sick” ones that failed to modernize themselves, leaving contemporary Muslims with nothing but a feeling of hatred and envy toward the powerful and more advanced West (Fradkin 2001:28; Rosworth 2001). They reject the notion that American foreign policy has contributed to Arabs’ negative perceptions of the United States. In contrast, they believe that America has often aligned itself with the interests of the Arab and Muslim worlds, which in response made America the scapegoat for the serious problems facing their societies, such as the lack of democracy, economic reform, and freedoms (Fradkin 2001:28; Rubin 2002:74& 81; Cornell 2002).

As a result, they believe that the West does not need to change its policies toward the Arab and Muslim worlds. Instead, they urge American and Western governments to pressure their Arab and Muslim counterparts to open the Arab and Muslim countries for political and economic reform. They also don’t mind increasing America’s efforts to educate Arabs and Muslims about its values, culture, and policies.

On the contrary, the second approach rejects the notion that Arabs and Muslims hate America because of its values or culture (Brumberg 2002:4; Telhami 2003; Andoni 2002). Instead, it focuses on America’s foreign policy, especially toward the Arab-Israeli conflict, as the major source of Arabs’ negative attitudes toward America (The White House Bulletin. 2002; Asali 2002:7; Fuller 2003:152). Followers of this theory criticize America for supporting several authoritarian regimes in the Arab and Muslim worlds, for imposing sanctions on Iraq during the 1990s, and for invading Iraq in 2003 (Robberson 2003; Talbot 2003:30). Some of them consider American foreign policy as a continuation

of the policies of European colonialism (MacFarquhar 2003; Al-Barghouti 2003). They distrust America's current intentions and interventions in the Middle East and believe that America's policies in the Arab and Muslim worlds are based on America's selfish political and economic interests rather than on the American values of freedom, human rights, and democracy (MacFarquhar 2003; Lynch 2003; Al-Barghouti 2003, Said Aug 2003, Said Jul 2003).

At the policy level, advocates of this theory believe that America's image can only improve if America changes its policies toward the Arab and Muslim worlds, especially toward the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. They also mistrust America's attempts to promote democracy and reform in the Muslim world and pay little interest to the need to educate Arabs about American and Western values and cultures.

The two previous approaches have many limitations. First, they provide two simplistic and dichotomous views of the nature and root causes of Arab Occidentalism. The first theory views contemporary Arab perceptions of America and the West mainly as mindless reflections of Arab history and culture, especially of the teachings of the Islamic religion, which the proponents consider to be inherently hostile to non-Muslim cultures, religions, and peoples. On the other hand, the second theory considers Arabs' perceptions of America as a mechanical reaction to America's foreign policies toward the Middle East.

Second, the first theory looks at Arabs' views of America as if they are homogenous and stagnant, which leaves little room, if any, for explaining why pro-American and pro-Western attitudes may exist in the Arab world. It also fails to explain



how Arabs' perceptions of America change over time and across place. On the other hand, the second approach underestimates the influence of Arabs' own circumstances and ideas on their perceptions of America and the West because it sees Arab Occidentalism primarily as a mere reaction to Western foreign policies.

At the policy level, the two approaches seem to be fixed to a limited number of inflexible policy options. In this regard, the first theory leaves little room for reviewing and reevaluating current American foreign policies toward the Arab and Muslim worlds although many public opinion surveys show that America's foreign policies are concerning to large segments of the Arab and Muslim populations. On the other hand, the second theory does not provide many policy options other than the West's need to change its own policies. It also denies, to some extent, Arabs' need to be educated about Western values and cultures.

In addition to the previous problems, many of the contemporary writings on Arabs' views of the West in general and of America in particular lack a deeper understanding of the historical roots of such views. Recent writings often focus on the period after the Second World War, if not on the last few years. Therefore, such writings neglect earlier stages, when America used to enjoy a different image in the Arab and Muslim worlds (Makdisi 2002; Prados 2001:2; Khalidi 2004:30-36). They also fail to offer a deeper understanding of the historical roots and development of Arab Occidentalism (Kinnane 2004:95).

## ***2) Study Objective, Importance, and Main Arguments***

In this context, the current study hopes to contribute to the contemporary debate on the nature and root causes of Arab Occidentalism by highlighting the Occidental discourses of three intellectual leaders of late nineteenth century Egypt, Jamal al-Din al-Afghani (1838-1897), Qasim Amin (1863-1908), and Abd al-Rahman al-Kawakibi (1854–1902). Analyzing the Occidental views of these three intellectual pioneers should contribute to our understanding of Arab Occidentalism for five main reasons.

***First***, Egypt at the end of the nineteenth century was the birthplace of major political and intellectual movements that transformed Arabs' modern views of themselves and the West. This is because the middle of the nineteenth century witnessed the rapid military and economic decline of the Ottoman Empire, the largest Muslim empire since the fifteenth century. This retreat weakened the Ottomans' ability to defend the Arab and Muslim countries against the incursions of European colonialism, which succeeded in gaining control over the majority of the Arab and Muslim countries by the end of the nineteenth century. In response, Arab governments and intellectuals launched several political and intellectual reform movements, which laid the foundation for some of today's most dominant Arab ideologies, Islamism, Arab nationalism, and liberalism, and transformed Arab's perceptions of themselves and others.

There was no place in the Arab world at the end of the nineteenth century where these transformations and reform movements were more radical and influential than in Egypt. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, Egypt went through a successful modernization process that improved the productivity of Egypt's agricultural economy,

introduced new industries, built a strong Egyptian military, opened Western-style educational institutions, sent Egyptians to learn modern sciences in Europe, and employed many Europeans in the Egyptian administrative system. Yet, Egypt's progress was interrupted in the 1840s, after several major European countries allied with the Ottoman Empire to put an end to Egypt's rising economic and military power. After that, Egypt went on a path of continuous economic and political decline that led to its colonization by the British in 1882.

However, despite its decline, Egypt was, during the second half of the nineteenth century, one of the most modernized Arab countries, with a relatively large number of scholars and strong Islamic institutions, such as Al-Azhar. This made Egypt the intellectual center of the Arab world, to which leading non-Egyptian Arab scholars, such as Abd al-Rahman al-Kawakibi, and non-Arab Muslim intellectuals, such as Jamal al-Din al-Afghani, migrated to live and spread their new ideas. At the same time, Egypt witnessed the birth and growth of one of the early nationalistic movements in the Arab world, as native Egyptian military officers and scholars, some of them educated in Europe, sought since the 1880s to build an Egyptian national front. That movement played an important and pioneering role in reforming Egypt and in resisting the hegemony of European colonialism.

*Second*, studying the Occidental discourses of Jamal al-Din al-Afghani, Qasim Amin, and Abd al-Rahman al-Kawakibi, will explain the way some of today's most influential political and intellectual Arab movements, Islamism, Arab nationalism, and

liberalism, see America and the West through the eyes of some of their most influential, diverse, and inspiring founders.

This is because each of the three intellectuals helped lay the foundations for one or more of some of today's most dominant Arab intellectual and political movements. Afghani is considered to be one of the most powerful and influential Muslim intellectuals who lived in the nineteenth century. He is credited to be the founder of the Islamic reform movement that spread all over the Muslim world in the second half of the nineteenth century, as the chief agitator against the incursion of European colonialism into the Muslim world during his life, and as the founder of the national movements in several Muslim countries, such as Egypt, Persia, and Turkey (Imarah 1981). "Afghani," Arthur Goldschmidt, Jr., (2002:180) noted, "pops up in almost every political movement that stirred in the Middle East in the late nineteenth century."

The ideas of Qasim Amin and Abd al-Rahman al-Kawakibi were less influential during their lives compared with Afghani's, but they were not less groundbreaking and inspiring for later Arab generations. Qasim Amin, a European-educated Egyptian lawyer, is famous for his Egyptian nationalistic attitudes and for promoting liberal values and ideas, especially regarding the importance of educating and liberating Muslim women. Amin's liberal views that challenged some of the most dominant social taboos of his time made him a subject of strong critique during and after his life. Yet Amin is celebrated today by many liberal and conservative Arab thinkers alike as a major founder of Arab modern thinking, who devoted most of his writings to defending the rights of Muslim women (Imarrah 1989:13; Esposito 1995:58).

If the conservative social agenda of the Arab masses made Amin's ideas less popular at his time, it was Abd al-Rahman al-Kawakibi's pro-democratic ideas that led many Arab and Muslim governments to fight his ideas during and after his life. Kawakibi left at least two main contributions to modern Arabic political thinking. First, he is seen as one of the early Muslim founders of Arab nationalism, a cause that was initially championed by Arab Christian intellectuals against the Islamic nationalistic views spread by the Ottoman Empire. Second, Kawakibi wrote one of the most inspiring and celebrated books on the anatomy of tyranny and tyrannical rule in the Arab world. Kawakibi's anti-authoritarian political views led to his persecution during his life and to the persecution of his ideas after his death. Yet Kawakibi's ideas have continued to inspire the writings of many pro-democracy Arab intellectuals (Al-Hulu 2005; Al-Rabi'i 2004). Kawakibi's ideas on the nature of authoritarian regimes have been regularly cited since the fall of the regime of Saddam Hussein, in 2003, which was seen by many Arab intellectuals as one of the most tyrannical Arab regimes (Dajani 2004; Jelbi 2003).

In addition, the Occidental views of the three leaders are not just influential; they are also diverse. Afghani was a religious leader who sought to motivate the Muslim masses and governments against the incursions of European colonialism in the Muslim world. Qasim Amin was a liberal nationalistic intellectual who focused on social and cultural reform and was willing to challenge the conservative agenda of the Muslim masses in order to promote his liberal views. Kawakibi spoke out strongly against Muslim governments while respecting the conservative nature of the Muslim masses.

There have been few studies that have focused on analyzing the Occidental views of the three thinkers. Those who study Afghani tend to focus on his influence on contemporary Muslim movements, although some highlight his critical views of the West. Those who study Qasim Amin usually highlight his defense of women's rights. Those who study Kawakibi tend to focus on his arguments for Arab nationalism and against tyrannical rule. By focusing on the Occidental views of the three thinkers, this study hopes to explore new areas in the ideas and legacies of these three pioneers.

*Third*, by using discourse analysis, as utilized by Edward Said in his study of Orientalism and as later improved by post-colonial theory, to analyze the Occidental views of Afghani, Qasim Amin, and Kawakibi, the study hopes to provide a better understanding of the factors that shaped Arab Occidentalism, as it appears in the writings of the three intellectuals in late nineteenth century Egypt.

In this regard, the study argues that the Occidental discourses of Afghani, Qasim Amin, and Kawakibi, were part of a wider and more dominant Arab discourse on reform and awakening that dominated the thinking and writings of the three intellectuals and many other Arab and Muslim intellectuals at their time. These reformist discourses were shaped by the writers' understanding of their circumstances and culture and of the process of reform and how it should be achieved, by their ambivalent attitudes toward the West both as an obstacle against reform that should be mocked and as a model for reform that should be mimicked, and by their attitudes toward and willingness to work with their contemporary authoritarian Muslim governments and economically impoverished, politically weak, and socially conservative Muslim masses.

To be more specific, the study argues that the Occidental discourses of Afghani, Qasim Amin, and Kawakibi, were clearly influenced by four main variables:

- (1) The political circumstances of their contemporary Muslim societies. In this regard, intellectuals who attempted to work in unity with the tyrannical Muslim regimes were more likely to hold anti-Western views.
- (2) The conservative culture of the Muslim masses. In this regard, intellectuals who were less critical of the conservative agenda of the Muslim masses held more anti-Western views. The study also shows that all three intellectuals held negative attitudes toward the nature of the Western individual in particular, who was seen as a selfish, materialistic individual.
- (3) Western foreign policies toward the Arab and Muslim worlds. In this regard, all three intellectuals viewed Western foreign policies negatively.
- (4) Reform and how it should be achieved. In this respect, intellectuals who saw reform as a gradual and educational process held more pro-Western views than those who saw reform as a political and radical process.

In addition, the thesis argues that the three intellectuals, to serve their reform agendas, mobilized the information they had about the West, used ambivalent discourses that sought to mimic and mock the West at the same time; and two of them used double

discourses, one when talking to Muslims and another when talking to Westerners, in order to remain consistent before their Muslim audience.

This led to the crystallization of at least three distinct Occidental discourses. The first discourse, used by Jamal al-Din al-Afghani, sought to achieve reform by calling on the Muslim masses and governments to unite together against Western colonialism. This goal led Afghani to emphasize an image of the West as a threat to the unity and progress of the Muslim countries. At the same time, Afghani deemphasized his perception of the West as a model for intellectual and political reform in the Muslim world. Afghani's Occidental discourse is discussed in detail in the second chapter of this thesis.

Qasim Amin, whose Occidental discourse is analyzed in the third chapter, despised politics, focused instead on social and cultural reform, and was willing to challenge some of the social and cultural taboos, which he perceived to be wrong, at his time. This led Amin to focus on the West as a model for social and cultural reform that should be mimicked. At the same time, Amin deemphasized the information he had about the negative aspects of Western civilization and the negative effects of Western colonialism on the progress of the Arab and Muslim societies.

The third Occidental discourse, used by Kawakibi and examined in the fourth chapter of this study, was very critical of the authoritarianism of the Muslim governments while being careful not to offend the conservative Muslim masses. This led Kawakibi to introduce the West as a model for political reform that should be mimicked. On the other hand, Kawakibi mocked the West at the cultural and religious levels.



The circumstances of Egyptian society in the second half of the nineteenth century, which shaped the former discourses, will be discussed in detail in the second chapter. I will attempt to show how Egyptians in particular and Arabs and Muslims in general came to realize, at the middle of the nineteenth century, the weakness of their civilization and to feel the need to reform their countries by democratizing their political regimes, reforming the thinking of the Muslim masses, and modernizing their economies and militaries. The chapter will also highlight some of the attempts that were taken to modernize Egypt and how these steps failed, because of internal and external obstacles, to change the conditions of the vast majority of the Egyptian masses, who remained economically impoverished, politically weak, and socially conservative.

I will conclude the study with a summary of the main characteristics of the Occidental discourses used by the three writers. I will pay special attention to the way they saw America in comparison with the rest of the West and to the way they saw the role of religion in general, and Islam in particular, in shaping the relationship between the Arab and Muslim world and the West.

***Fourth***, determining the main factors that shape Arabs' views of America and the West should help us understand what is needed, at the policy level, to improve such perceptions. In this regard, I have highlighted at the first few pages of this study how the current debate on Arab Occidentalism has reached a stalemate because of its dichotomous nature. Alternatively, I will seek to build a more comprehensive policy approach toward improving Arabs' views of America and the West. Such approach should be build on an inclusive understanding of the various factors that shape Arab Occidentalism.

*Fifth*, the study intends to highlight the way Islam appeared in and affected the Occidental views of each of the three intellectuals. This is because the role of religion, particularly Islam, in shaping Arab Occidentalism is widely disputed today. In this regard, it is important to remind the reader of how late nineteenth century Arab and Muslim intellectuals are viewed today. They, even the most religious among them, such as Afghani, are seen as liberal reformers, who sought to reinterpret the Islamic religion and traditions in a way that would encourage Muslim to learn from the West at as many levels as possible.

According to John Esposito (1992:55), late nineteenth century Arab and Muslim reformers, Afghani, Qasim Amin, and Kawakibi included, “did not seek to restore a pristine past but instead wished to reformulate [their] Islamic heritage in response to the political, scientific, and cultural challenge of the West. [They] provided an Islamic rationale for accepting modern ideas and institutions, whether scientific, technological, or political.”

In this regard, late nineteenth century Arab and Muslim reformers were different from their predecessors and their followers in some important ways.

Arab and Muslim reformers who lived earlier, during the end of the eighteenth century and the first decades of the nineteenth century, did not witness the full retreat of the Ottoman Empire. Thus, they were occupied with how to rebuild the Ottoman Empire and Muslim states to catch up with the West again. However, at the end of the nineteenth century, Arab and Muslim reformers realized that their civilization and societies were far behind the West. Therefore, this second generation of reformers focused their attention

on reforming the thinking of their Muslim followers and on convincing them of the necessity to learn from the more advanced Western civilization.

On the other hand, reformers, who lived in the first half of the twentieth century and after were confronted with a different set of challenges. At that time, the West was not only a political and economic challenge; it was also a cultural and ideological one. This is because European colonialism, which led to the occupation of the great majority of the Muslim countries after the end of the nineteenth century, constituted a deep threat to the cultural and religious identities of the Muslim masses that were less connected with the Islamic religious and cultural traditions, compared with the Muslim masses at the end of the nineteenth century. In other words, late nineteenth century Arab and Muslim reformers were addressing Muslim masses that were not suffering cultural and religious identity problems. So, nineteenth century reformers focused all their attention on convincing their religiously rooted Muslim masses of their need to learn from Western political, scientific, and intellectual achievements:

Afghani was addressing people whose primary commitment was to Islamic values, and in saying modern Western virtues were to be found in Islam he was trying to attain Muslim acceptance of those modern ideas. ...By the 1930s, Islamic liberals were writing for an audience educated in Western ways, and when they conflated Islam and modern values they were trying to reinstate Islam with that audience, and to build a type of Islam that their hearers would find as acceptable as they did Western values. Or else they were speaking to people torn between Islam and secular Westernized loyalties, and trying to indicate that their newer ideas could be reconciled with Islam. (Keddie 1978: XVII & XVIII)

However, when the Muslim masses started losing their connection with their religious and cultural traditions, after being occupied for decades by European colonizers, Arab and Muslim reformers had to focus on portraying the cultural and religious threat posed by Western colonialism to the Arab and Muslim identities. That threat increased

after the decolonization of the Muslim countries in the second half of the nineteenth century, when post-colonial Arab and Muslim governments chose to follow secular Western ideologies, such as socialism, as their primary path to modernization. This choice led to a long wave of clashes, sometimes violent, between the Arab and Muslim governments and the pro-Islamic reformers and movements. This wave is still alive until today, and it is partly caused by the way the Arab and Muslim governments themselves, rather than the West, force Westernization on their masses.

In the aftermath of independence ... [when] newly emerging states struggled to establish themselves, the West proved a necessary and often popular source and model. Although the independence struggle left deep resentment and scars, most rulers appropriated their colonial institutional legacy and ties. Modernization was imposed from above by governments and Westernized elites. European languages remained the second (and, among modern elites, often their preferred) language. In some countries European languages were the official language of the government, the courts, and university education. Modern bureaucratic, educational, and legal systems continued intact, as did trade and commerce. Islamic law was generally confined to the area of personal status and family law. ... Individuals, countries, cities, and institutions judged themselves, and were judged, to be modern by the degree to which they were Westernized—in language, dress, manners, knowledge, organizational structure and values, architecture, and infrastructure. (Esposito 1995:67-68)

Today's Islamic reform movements may share some common ground with Afghani, Qasim Amin, and Kawakibi, such as their respect for Islam as a religion and a way of life. However, contemporary movements depart from the three intellectuals in other aspects. In this regard, the current study intends to highlight some important statements that were made by the three intellectuals against using religion to fuel the conflict between the East and the West because such statements are not very common today.

This does not mean that none of the three writers expressed any anti-Western views that were religiously based or colored. Actually, as highlighted by future chapters, both Afghani and Kawakibi expressed some religiously negative views of the West. However, the three writers clearly expressed their beliefs that the conflict between the East and the West is motivated by political and material interests rather than by genuine religious ones. I believe that highlighting those positive statements should improve the Occidental views of those who follow and admire Afghani, Qasim Amin, and Kawakibi today.

### ***3) Study Methodology and Main Concepts***

This study will count on discourse analysis, as used by Edward Said in his study of Orientalism and later improved by post-colonial theory, to analyze the Occidental views of the three Muslim thinkers examined in this study. Toward this end, I will introduce, in the following paragraphs, an overview of how Edward Said and post-colonial theory used discourse analysis to study the way human groups see each other. I will conclude with a definition of Occidentalism and with some useful concepts that I will use throughout the rest of the study to analyze the Occidental views of the three Muslim thinkers.

#### *1. Edward Said's Use of Discourse Analysis*

Edward Said's writings on Orientalism not only gave the theory of Orientalism new and intellectually stimulating meanings; it has also transformed the way Western academia thinks of its approach toward studying the Orient in particular and other groups and cultures in general (Smelser and Baltes 2001: 10976). Said saw Orientalism as a Western "academic field of study and knowledge" that has the East as its subject. He also saw Orientalism as a "style of thought" that is widespread within the West and that adopts a dichotomous view of "the Orient" and "the Occident" and makes essential statements about the Orient. Most importantly, Said thought of Orientalism as a discourse that serves the interests of the European colonial powers by making the Orient more governable (Said 1979: 2-3; Prasad 2003: 10).

Since the late eighteenth century as a very roughly defined starting point Orientalism can be discussed and analyzed as the corporate institution for dealing with the Orient—dealing with it by making statements about it, authorizing views of it, describing it, by teaching it, settling it, ruling over it: in short, Orientalism

as a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient. (Said 1979:3)

By defining Orientalism this way, Said offered scholars of cultural critiques numerous valuable theoretical tools to analyze the way human groups see each other.

First, Said separated ideas and images from the entities they claim to represent. He argued that the West constructed an image of the Orient that does not represent the real Orient, but reflects the way the West itself wants to see the Oriental other.

Second, Said exposed the relationship between culture and political interests on one side and scholarship and the movement of ideas on the other side. Said (1979:204) thought that Europe's bias toward the East was "aided by general cultural pressures that tended to make more rigid the sense of difference between the European and Asiatic parts of the world." He also believed that Orientalism was spread and promoted by the institutions of European colonialism that sought to develop a "a moral justification for colonialism" by portraying the East as a weaker and disadvantaged other waiting for a more powerful and civilized West to bring the Orient out of its dark ages (Prasad 2003: 12).

Third, Said offered some insights into the intellectual process through which a group of people can distort the image of another group. For instance, Said spoke about how the West reduced the Orient to a disadvantaged "other" that is structurally related to the West through a binary relationship (Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin 2000:24; Kennedy 2000:17). In the binary system, the West was always linked with the superior poles of the binaries, and the non-West was always linked to the inferior poles.

In addition to these valuable ideas, some analysts believe that Said's most important contribution to the study of the way human groups see each other was his introduction of the concept of discourse as a main analytical tool that can be used to analyze the way European colonial powers influenced their colonies at the cultural level. According to Robert Young (2001: 384), before Said many theories, such as Marxism, provided strong criticism of European colonialism and its negative influence on the colonized nations at various levels. Yet those theories did not focus enough on colonialism's cultural influence. Therefore, when Said introduced the notion of colonial discourse he presented "a conceptual general paradigm" that can be used to analyze the cultural side of colonialism and imperialism.

In this regard, Said suggested that colonialism was reflected in the various texts that European colonialism produced. Those texts were created by numerous institutions, within the colonial societies, to reinforce those institutions' colonial tendencies and interests by creating an intellectual discourse that justifies colonialism. In other words, Said opened the door to studying colonialism through studying its texts, which were regarded by Said as reflections of the power the West has upon the Orient more than expressions of a Western desire to know the real Orient.

## *2. Critiques of Edward Said's Orientalism*

Said's writings, especially *Orientalism* (1979), have generated many critiques (Young 2001:38-40). First, some scholars questioned the ability of the colonial texts to represent the history they claim to represent. This is because texts sometimes don't tell the truth. In addition, real history sometimes does not get recorded in texts. Second, Said



was often accused of looking at colonial discourse as if it were a unified homogenous text that crosses times and geographical locations. In doing so, Said was accused of not permitting the appearance of competing colonial or anti-colonial discourses within the colonial countries. He was also accused of being selective and of focusing on minor writings that prove his theory while neglecting other major writings that may not fit his paradigm. According to Gyan Prakash (1995:202), “the claim that many scholars and several strains within the Orientalist tradition escaped its pernicious prejudices and politics has been a persistent theme in the critique of Said’s work.”

At a more political level, some writers questioned Said’s motives and accused him of tactfully promoting a personal ideological agenda as a Palestinian refugee, who is seeking to over-blame and criticize the West because of its support of the state of Israel. For instance, Bruce Bawer (2002:629) saw Said as a “Palestinian spokesman” who viewed Israel as a “product of colonialism” and who over-criticized the West for being anti-Arab and anti-Muslim, using Western-developed standards of cultural critique while ignoring the “downside of recent Islamic history.” Said’s agenda, according to Bawer, led him to ask the West to “suspend judgment entirely” toward the Orient and to attack “the very notion of terrorism” as an “imprecise, ideologically charged, and—well—downright vulgar” concept. Said’s ideas, Bawer thought (2002:634), weakened the West’s ability to understand the real hatred that some Arab and Muslim groups have against the West. This led some writers, such as Charles Paul Freund (2001:63), to argue that Orientalist critique “does not fit the aftermath of the [9/11] attacks” because it neglects “the other side of the Orientalism coin: Occidentalism.”

### *3. Post-Colonial Theory Analysis of Occidentalism*

It was Edward Said's critique in *Orientalism* (1978) of the cultural politics of academic knowledge, from the basis of his own experience of growing up as an "oriental" in two British colonies, that effectively founded postcolonial studies as an academic discipline. (Young 2001:383)

Scholars, such as Robert Young (2001:383-394) and Valerie Kennedy (2000:111-120), believe that Said's writings were very influential in establishing post-colonial studies because of several reasons. First, Said was very capable of introducing his ideas, on colonialism and on anti-colonial movements, in a theoretical framework that relates them to important Western analytical theories, such as structuralism and post-structuralism. Second, Said's usage of the notion of discourse as a main analytical paradigm was intriguing and empowering to the field of cultural studies. Third, Said's *Orientalism* was always seen as "theoretically and politically problematic" and it survived an unprecedented number of critiques. In this regard, the many critiques and debates that Said's *Orientalism* has generated helped shape post-colonial theory. "In fact," Young argued (2001:384), "postcolonial studies has actually defined itself as an academic discipline through the range of objections, reworkings and counter-arguments that have been marshaled in such great variety against Said's work."

Afterward, post-colonial theory had a life of its own and started to develop a number of key concepts that can be used to analyze the Occident's views toward the Orient and vice versa. According to Robert Young (2001:57-61), post-colonial theory inherited several social and political movements that have been shaping European and world politics since the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Although distinct, these movements share together a critical view of colonialism and imperialism and a general

support for the liberation of the colonized nations and their cultures. One of these movements is Marxism, which, although being itself a Western product, included strong criticism of colonialism and imperialism, especially for their economic manipulation of the colonized.

After the Second World War, post-colonial theory sought to provide at least three main types of cultural critiques. First, post-colonial theory continued to analyze the imperial and colonial aspects of the Western and European cultures. Second, post-colonial theory supported the cultural decolonization of the Third World and stood by the newly independent nations in their attempts to empower their native peoples and cultures. Third, as many of the independence movements failed to substantially change the power structures in their societies or to achieve their full cultural and political independence, post-colonial theory continued to analyze the new forms of Western influence on the Orient.

In this context, post colonial theory developed several useful ideas and concepts for the study of the way Easterners see the West. These ideas and concepts were succinctly summarized by Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin in their book, *Post-Colonial Studies: the Key Concepts* (2000). This book provides many useful insights on how colonized people responded to colonialism. The authors speak about the resistance of the colonized people to their colonizers as a complex movement that included not just the rejection and mockery of the colonizer but also the appropriation of the colonizer's language, ideas, and institutions in order to be able to fight its hegemony (p.14). They believe that the hegemony of the colonizer over the colonized people was

not always achieved by military or other materialistic means. It was also achieved through ideological means, by persuading the colonized people to believe that the interests of the colonizers are the interests of all (p.116). In response, the colonized people sought to appropriate some aspects of the colonizer's language, discourse, and institutions in order to empower themselves with the required means to resist the materialistically and culturally powerful colonizers (pp.19-20). As a result, the discourse of the colonized people toward the colonizers was in many cases an ambivalent discourse that included a "simultaneous attraction toward and repulsion from" the colonizers (p.13). This made the desire of the colonized people to mimic their colonizers not far from and sometimes mixed with their desire to mock and criticize it (pp.139-142).

These ideas, I believe, are very helpful for my analysis of the Occidental views of Afghani, Qasim Amin, and Kawakibi because the three of them, as the study argues, simultaneously saw the West both as a model for progress that should be imitated and a threat that should be mocked and rejected.

In addition to the previous important arguments, I would like to refer to the writings of Xuaomei Chen and Junhua Dia (2002) on Chinese Occidentalism. Junhua Dia believed that Orientalism and post-colonial theory unintentionally reaffirm some of the Eurocentric views that they claim to challenge because they were founded in Western and cultural critical theory. Therefore, Dia thought that any serious study of Occidentalism should be founded and rooted in the Orient itself and should focus on trying to understand the Orient's own reasons to look at the Occident from certain perspectives. In this regard, Dia thought that Occidentalism was adopted by Eastern developing nations to

achieve various reasons, such as affirming their legitimacy, constructing new ideologies and regimes, or even to oppress their own peoples. Dia and Chen define Occidentalism (2002:2) as a “discursive practice,” in which Oriental entities contrast themselves with the Western other to achieve their own goals.

Occidentalism is a discourse that has been evolved by various and competing groups within Chinese society for a variety of different ends, largely though not exclusively, within domestic Chinese politics. As such, it has been both a discourse of oppression and a discourse of liberation. (Chen 2002:3)

In this regard, Xiaomei Chen believed that at least two distinct versions of Occidentalism existed in post-Mao China. The first version, which Chen calls “official Occidentalism,” was used by the Chinese government to contrast itself with the West in order to support its nationalistic ideology and sometimes to oppress its own people. The other version of Occidentalism, which Chen calls “anti-official Occidentalism,” was used by anti-government Chinese groups “as a metaphor for a political liberation against ideological oppression within a totalitarian society.”

Following the same logic, this study argues that the Occidental views of Afghani, Qasim Amin, and Kawakibi were motivated by a larger discourse on reform that was deeply rooted in the circumstances of their society. In addition, the study argues that the three writers manipulated the information they had about the West in order to fit their reform agenda. This led to the rise of several distinct Occidental discourses, each of which was manipulated by its source’s view of reform, view of the West, and view of the role of the Muslim masses and governments in achieving reform.

#### *4. Defining Occidentalism and Occidental Discourse*

Based on the theoretical framework outlined in the previous sections, I will attempt to highlight some useful analytical concepts that I will depend on throughout the rest of the study.

***Discourse.*** According to Robert Young (2001: 398 -402), every discourse is made up of statements. Every statement is something more than just a text or a piece of language. Statements are constituted of specific events, subjects, and relations between events and subjects, in addition to language. Statements attempt to affect their surrounding circumstances and they are also shaped by those circumstances. Statements seek to reflect neutrally the realities they describe, but they are never a mere reflection of those realities. In any society, every discourse is influenced by its source and the status that source occupies in society. Because the components of discourse, such as concepts, events, and subjects, are in constant mobility and change, discourses may include “diverse and heterogeneous statements.”

***Occidentalism.*** Occidentalism is the way the Orient sees the Occident, the people of the Occident, and the relationship between the Occident and the Orient. According to Hassan Hanafi (1991:44), Occidentalism is as old as the relationship between the Orient and the Occident. However, modern Occidentalism has been shaped by the influence European colonialism has on the Orient. Therefore, contemporary colonialism is partly a reaction to European colonialism and partly an attempt to complete the decolonization of the Orient, especially at the ideological level. However, Occidentalism is not always a pro-decolonization and an anti-Western movement. Occidental discourse can be pro-

Western, as in the case of many pro-Western Arab intellectuals, including Qasim Amin, whose writings will be analyzed by the current research. Moreover, Occidental discourse can even be used to oppress Eastern pro-liberation groups (Chen 2003:3).

***Occidental Discourse.*** Occidental discourse is a system of statements that can be made about the West and Westerners and their relationships with each other and with the Orient (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin 2000:42). The goal of Occidental discourse is to affect its surrounding circumstances, which simultaneously affect the discourse and shape it. Occidental discourse is heterogeneous and in a contentious state of change. It can include contradictory notions and ideas at the same time, such as imitating Western technology while rejecting Western social and cultural norms.

Occidental discourse attempts to reflect the realities of the Occident. However, it can never represent the Occident as it is, because Occidental discourse is always subjectively affected by its source and by its surrounding circumstances. The place and dominance of any Occidental discourse, in a specific Oriental society, depends on many variables, one of which is the place and power that the supporters of a particular discourse occupy in society.

According to Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin (2000:12-14) Occidental discourse can be an ambivalent one that includes a desire to mock the Occident and to mimic it at the same time. This is because the colonized people may seek to appropriate their colonizers' culture and institutions in order to empower themselves to be able to resist their colonizers' cultural and material hegemony.

**Colonialism.** According to Anshuman Prasad (2003:4), colonialism is an old phenomenon that started with colonial powers like the Roman and Ottoman Empires long before modern European colonialism started in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. However, what distinguishes modern European colonialism is its focus on exploiting “the wealth of the colonized that contributed to the industrialization of Europe in a systematic way.” In addition, European colonialism, according to Prasad (2003:5), was “new in that it attempted to subjugate its colonies in the realm of culture and ideology as well.” Prasad (2003:5) defines colonialism as “the actual physical conquest, occupation, and administration of the territory of one country by another,” which makes it different from imperialism which is “is an exercise of economic and political power by one country over another that may or may not involve direct occupation.”

**Binarism.** According to Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin (2000:23-24), binarism initially means “a combination of two things, a pair, two, or duality.” It also means that the opposition between two entities is “the most extreme form of difference possible,” such as in the difference between sun/moon, black/white, and birth/death. When binary opposition is used to define the relationship between groups, such as colonizers and colonies, it creates a division that is difficult to overcome.

**Other / Othering.** According to Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin (2000:169-173), the other is “anyone who is separate from one’s self.” The relationship between the self and the other does not have to be a negative or a conflicting one. However, when the relationship between the self and the other is about power and when one entity is more powerful than the other, the powerful party may try to create an “other” that is completely



opposite or weaker than its own self. The process of creating an opposite, or controlled other, is called “othering.”

#### ***4) Research Plan and Limitations***

In the second chapter of this study, I will explain the general ideological, political, and economic circumstances in which Egyptians lived at the end of the nineteenth century. I believe that understanding those conditions is an essential requirement for our understanding of the Occidental views that were prominent in Egypt at that time.

In each chapter, from three to five, I will analyze the Occidental discourse used by one of the writers examined by this study. In chapter three I will analyze the Occidental views of Jamal al-Din al-Afghani (1838-1897). In chapter four I will study the ideas of Qasim Amin (1863-1908). The Occidental discourse of Abd al-Rahman al-Kawakibi (1854–1902) will be examined in the fifth chapter.

I will conclude the study with a summary of the main characteristics of the Occidental discourses used by the three writers. I will also pay special attention to the way they saw America in comparison with the rest of the West and to the way they saw the role of religion in general, and Islam in particular, in shaping the relationship between the Arab and Muslim world and the West. Finally, I will examine the implications of the current study at the policy level.

***Limitations of the Study.*** I would like to remind the reader of the limitations of this study. Using discourse analysis to analyze the way Egyptians saw America and the West at the end of the nineteenth century is a very useful method that is capable of performing many analytical tasks. Yet because of the limited resources of this research,

in terms of time and scope, I will not be able to utilize discourse analysis to its full analytical capabilities. To be more specific I don't expect the current research to achieve the following possible goals:

1) To introduce a full account of how Egyptians viewed America and the West at the end of the nineteenth century or before or after that time.

2) To compare in depth the Occidental discourses used by Afghani, Amin, and Kawakbi with other Occidental discourses that were prominent in Egypt or in the Arab world during their lives.

3) To give a full account of the institutions or conditions of Egyptian society at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and how those institutions or conditions shaped the various Occidental discourses that were present at that time.

Rather, the main objective of the next chapters is to introduce an accurate and lively picture of some of the main Occidental discourses that were prominent in late nineteenth century Egypt. In this regard, I will attempt to introduce a picture that is capable of recognizing the full Occidental debate presented in the writings of the three studied thinkers. My goal is to expose this debate and to show its different and sometimes contradictory dimensions. In addition, I will highlight how each of the selected thinkers viewed the United States in particular and viewed the role of Islam in shaping the relationship between the Arab and Muslim worlds and the West. I will also conclude the study with some policy recommendation on how to improve Arabs' perceptions of the West.

## **Chapter 2**

### **Circumstances of Late Nineteenth Century Egypt**

The objective of this chapter is to highlight the historical context within which the Occidental discourses analyzed by this study emerged. To achieve this goal, I will start with a quick introduction to the history of Islamic Egypt. I will focus on the period since the middle of the thirteenth century, which witnessed the beginning of the decline of the Arab Middle East. Then I will focus in the rest of the chapter on describing the political, economic, and ideological conditions of nineteenth century Egypt. I will show how Egyptians felt at the beginning of the nineteenth century a strong need to reform their country, how they tried to achieve reform and development throughout the century, and how they failed, by the end of the century, in achieving this goal.

The study argues that these circumstances greatly influenced the Occidental views of Jamal al-Din al-Afghani, Qasim Amin, and Abd al-Rahman al-Kawakibi in several ways. These conditions kept the three writers occupied with reform as their main priority. They led the three intellectuals to see the West ambivalently, both as a colonizer that was a threat to progress and as a more advanced civilization that could be a model for reform. The same circumstances made it very difficult for the three thinkers to align themselves either with the Muslim governments, who were largely authoritarian, or with the Muslim masses, who were politically oppressed, economically impoverished, and culturally conservative.

### *1) Egypt under the Mamlukes*

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, Egypt was simultaneously governed by two forces, the Mamlukes and the Ottomans. The Mamlukes had governed Egypt since the middle of the thirteenth century, which witnessed the fall of the Abbasid Empire, which was the last major Arab Muslim Empire. As the capital of the Abbasid Empire, Baghdad was captured by the Mongols in 1258. Since then many Muslim Empires arose, but none of them was governed by Arabs and had the vast control over the Muslim world that the Abbasids did.

The Mamlukes were Turkish slave soldiers who were imported by successive Muslim caliphs from middle Asia to be trained as loyal soldiers to the caliphs (Goldschmidt 2002:120-122). Eventually the Mamluke soldiers gained increasing powers after their percentage increased in the Muslim militaries, and they were able to build a small empire centered in Egypt. The Mamlukes ruled Egypt from the middle of the thirteenth century until the Ottomans conquered it in 1517.

What was very unique about the Mamluke Empire was its pattern of power succession. The Mamluke soldiers were divided into numerous fractions. Every group was controlled by an *amir* (leader/ prince). After the death of each Mamluke sultan, his son would succeed him for a brief period of time, during which the Mamluke princes would fight each other until one of them subjugated the rest and rose to power. This made the Mamluke Empire literally an empire controlled by continuously fighting groups. However, according to Peter Mansfield (1991:23), the continual fighting among the

Mamlukes did not prevent them from showing in Egypt “many aspects of an advanced civilization.”

At the beginning of the sixteenth century, the Mamlukes faced a series of defeats at the hands of a new, rising Muslim empire, the Ottoman. The Ottomans started to rise in the thirteenth century, but they first went west, focusing their attention on invading their Christian neighbors. They invaded the Balkan states and captured Constantinople in 1453, ending the Byzantine Empire. Then they turned their attention toward Asia. During the period from 1502 until 1517, the Ottomans captured Persia, Iraq, Syria, Palestine, and Egypt and became a Muslim empire. However, contrary to previous Muslim empires, the Ottomans chose a capital, Constantinople, that was far distant from the heartland of Islam, moving the center of Islamic civilization away from the Arab Middle East.

The Ottoman Empire started to decline in the second half of the seventeenth century. In the eighteenth century, the Ottomans started losing land to the rising European colonial powers, and in the nineteenth century, the Ottoman Empire became “the sick man of Europe” (Mansfield 1991:35-45). The decline of the Ottoman Empire had many manifestations.

Economically, European countries controlled the sea, trade, and trade routes. They developed new industries and flooded the markets of the Muslim countries with manufactured products and in return bought cheaper raw materials. They used a system of “capitulations” to freely live, move, and trade in the Muslim countries in return for very low taxes, if any. According to Arthur Goldschmidt (2002:139), the practice of issuing “capitulations” goes back to previous Muslim empires, which signed agreements

to exempt Muslims who lived in non-Muslim countries from being subjugated to the laws of those countries. In return, foreign citizens living in the Muslim empires received the same treatment. The Ottomans encouraged those agreements when they were the world's superior power. Yet, when the Ottomans declined, those agreements had negative effects. The "capitulations" freed the European merchants from paying local taxes to the Muslim countries where they lived, traded, and prospered.

In addition, according to Peter Mansfield (1991:28), the Ottoman Empire was "a highly centralized" one, where "virtually all land within the Empire belonged to the Ottoman state," which prevented the rise of private ownership or of a "feudal nobility" that could balance the power of the sultan. The centralization of power in the Ottoman Empire was more apparent at the political level. Many Muslim countries, under Ottoman rule, were governed by Turkish or other foreign rulers, who were appointed by the sultan, and the masses lacked any political power or experience.

At the international level, European countries used various justifications to intervene in the internal affairs of the Ottoman Empire and to control some Muslim countries and ports. France and Russia intervened to protect the Christian religious minorities in the Ottoman Empire. Spain, Portugal and the British fought with each other over the control of important Muslim sea ports in the Gulf and India. And many Europeans were appointed by the Ottoman sultans and governors to high administrative posts to help reform the Ottoman Empire and the Muslim countries.

At the ideological and cultural levels, the Ottoman Empire and the Muslim countries went through numerous and continuous attempts at reform by introducing Western-style educational, administrative, and legal systems.

In Egypt, after defeating the Mamlukes in 1517, the Ottomans kept on sending Ottoman rulers for Egypt, but in reality they left most of the actual authority in the hands of the Mamlukes and their princes. According to William Cleveland (2000:65), Egypt “by the late eighteenth century had become in reality if not in name an autonomous state under a revived Mamluk order.” What happened was that the Ottoman governors of Egypt delegated too many administrative and financial authorities to the Mamluke amirs. Every Mamluke prince controlled some troops and a piece of land; from its peasants he collected high taxes. From time to time, one Mamluke prince was able to attract sufficient troops and wealth to subjugate the rest of the competing Mamluke factions under his control for a short period of time. But eventually the strong prince would be weakened and defeated due to the continuous fighting among the Mamlukes. As a result, the Mamluke regime weakened the central government and created a huge power vacuum, the Egyptians were squeezed for taxes, and the Mamluke regime was “unstable, oppressive, and unpopular.”

## ***2) Conditions of Nineteenth-Century Egypt***

Egypt made the fastest and most dramatic transformation of any Middle Eastern country in the nineteenth century. (Goldschmidt 2002:161)

At the end of the eighteenth century, Egypt was miserably governed by competing Mamluke factions. At the turn of the nineteenth century, Egypt was invaded by France, threw off its invaders, then rose militarily and economically to become a regional Muslim power that would threaten Constantinople itself. Yet by the middle of the nineteenth century Egypt's power declined again, and in 1882 Egypt fell under British occupation. The major transformations through which Egyptian society went during the nineteenth century uniquely shaped Egyptians' life at all levels. In the rest of this chapter, I will discuss the effects of those dramatic changes on three main levels: the political, the economic, and the ideological.

### *1. Political Life*

***The French Invasion of Egypt.*** In 1798, Napoleon Bonaparte led a French military expedition to successfully invade Egypt, aiming to expand the French Empire and to weaken its main rival, the British, by controlling the trade route to one of Britain's main colonies, India. Bonaparte easily defeated the Mamlukes and occupied Egypt, forming what Peter Mansfield (1991:43) called "the first non-Muslim invasion of the heartland of Islam." In three years, the Ottomans, helped by the British, were able to expel the French. According to Arthur Goldschmidt (2002:163), the French expedition, although unsuccessful, shaped Egypt's future in three important ways. First, the French occupation of Egypt alerted the other European powers, especially Britain, to Egypt's strategic "geographical position at the hinge of the Asian and African Continents,



guarding the principal route to India and the East” (Mansfield 1991:43). Second, the French occupation of Egypt demonstrated to Muslims beyond a doubt their decline and weakness and destroyed their wrong conviction of the superiority of the Ottoman Empire over Europe. Third, Bonaparte defeated the Mamlukes and created a huge power vacuum that they could not fill any more.

***Mohamed Ali's Dynasty.*** After the French left, Egypt spent several years in chaos until it was stabilized again under the rule of a tough but politically brilliant leader, Mohamed Ali, who would create modern Egypt and whose family would rule Egypt till 1952. An ethnic Albanian born in Macedonia, Mohamed Ali was sent to Egypt by the Ottoman sultan at the head (second in command) of an Albanian force to stabilize Egypt after the French had left. By 1805, Mohamed Ali was able to defeat the Mamlukes and rise to power. During his rule, which extended till 1848, Mohamed Ali transformed Egypt into a regional military and economic power. He stabilized the country and ended corruption, used European experts to modernize the irrigation system, introduced new crops (especially long-staple cotton), built new factories and protected them by imposing heavy tariffs against imports, and sent hundreds of Egyptians to Europe for education. As a result, Egyptian peasants were able to raise three crops a year in fields that used to produce just one crop, an estimated one million new acres of land were cultivated, and about 40,000 Egyptians were employed in industrial enterprises. In addition, Mohamed Ali was able to create a huge military, which he used to extend his rule over Sudan and Syria and to help the Ottoman Empire defeat its enemies. By the end of the 1830s, Egypt

became a regional power that was feared by the Ottoman Empire itself (Mansfield 1991:49, Goldschmidt 2002:163, Cleveland 2000:66-70).

At the end of the 1830s, Europe united with the Ottoman Empire to put an end to Mohamed Ali's ambitions. The European nations did not like Mohamed Ali's rising power for several reasons. First, they "preferred that a weakened Ottoman Empire should survive rather than be dismantled and swallowed by one of its rivals" (Mansfield 1991:56). Second, Britain in particular had growing political and economic interests in the Ottoman Empire. "In the 1830s," Arthur Goldschmidt (2002:154) explained, "Britain decided that the Ottoman Empire would be the best guardian of its routes to India and soon committed itself to the Empire's defense, signed trade treaties with the Ottomans, and by 1850 the Ottomans had become the leading customer of British manufactures and a major supplier of foodstuffs and raw materials to Britain."

In 1838 the British signed a treaty with the Ottoman sultan that gave Britain and the other European powers the right to trade throughout the Ottoman Empire in return for a tariff of only three per cent. Enforcing this treaty on Egypt meant the destruction of its fragile industries, which were protected by heavy tariffs. When Mohamed Ali refused to accept the treaty, Britain led an international coalition that included France, Prussia, Austria, and Russia to force a humiliating treaty on Mohamed Ali. The European powers forced Mohamed Ali to withdraw his troops from Syria, to reduce his military from 250,000 to 18,000 soldiers, and to open Egypt's economy and market to European products and traders. As a result, the European powers allied with the Ottoman sultan ended Mohamed Ali's ambitions (Toledano 1990:1-2).

Mohamed Ali was succeeded by his son Ibrahim in 1848, and then by a line of grandsons, Abbas (ruled 1848-1854), Said (1854-1863), Ismail (1863-1879), Tawfik (1879-1892), and Abbas Helmi (1892-1914). “Mehmet [Mohamed] Ali cast a giant shadow over the fortunes of his successors. His image loomed larger than life,” noted Toledano (1990:6).

*Egypt after Mohamed Ali.* Mohamed Ali left his successors with “a cohesive semi-independent state” (Mansfield 1990:85). But, he also left them with many growing problems, such as the opening of Egypt to European trade and economic pressure, the reduction of Egypt’s military power and its ability to defend itself, and the impoverishment of the vast majority of the Egyptian masses as land and wealth were concentrated in the hands of a small elite.

Both Said and Ismail tried to implement ambitious modernization programs for Egypt. Those programs included digging new canals, repairing dams, expanding both railways and steamer transport on the Nile, and building bridges and lighthouses. According to Peter Mansfield (1990:88), “the [Egyptian] cultivated area was extended by some 15 per cent and between 1862 and 1879 the value of exports and imports nearly tripled.” More importantly, Said started the digging of the Suez Canal and Ismail completed it. Those projects required a lot of money. When Egypt’s budget could not finance those huge projects, Said and Ismail resorted to an unfortunate and dangerous source of money: they took loans with high interest from European financial institutions.

In April 1876, Egypt announced bankruptcy. Soon after, the British imposed financial control over Egypt to guarantee the rights of their bond-holders. Then France

sent a financial mission to Egypt. A Nile flood and cotton pest caused Egypt more financial damages. The British and the French found that Egypt's financial crisis was partly caused by Ismail's unlimited authority and uncalculated policies. Therefore they pressure Ismail to delegate more authority to his ministers. In response, Ismail selected a cabinet that included a British minister of finance and a French minister of public works.

A series of confrontations between Ismail and the Europeans on one side and between Ismail and his military on another front, led to the removal of Ismail in 1879. According to Arthur Goldschmidt (2002:179), "when Ismail turned over the Khedivate to his son, Tawfik, and left Egypt in July 1879, the state debt stood at 93 million Egyptian pounds. It had been 3 million when he came to power in 1863."

Tawfik inherited Egypt's debt in addition to an unstable situation. Domestically, three main Egyptian elite groups pressured Tawfik to open the country for political reform and constitutional governance. The first was a group of religious reformers led by Jamal al-Din al-Afghani and his disciples, who called for religious and political reform. The second group was the Egyptian officers in the Egyptian military. After being neglected and denied higher positions in the military for decades, some Egyptian officers reached higher ranks in the military and wanted to prove their capabilities and to acquire more power. At the end of the 1870s, the Egyptian soldiers united behind an Egyptian colonel named Ahmed Orabi, who led them to revolt against Ismail and Tawfik and to fight the British invasion of Egypt in 1882 before being defeated and exiled. The third group consisted of civil servants, land-owners, and other notables who favored political reform. Many of them were part of the Turkish elite but identified themselves with the

aspirations of the Egyptian people. However, this third group was not friendly to the masses. They supported reform to some extent, but they despised public uprisings and mass revolutions. The three groups together formed a front at the end of the 1870s that led the national demand for reform and national opposition to Europe's intervention in Egypt's affairs.

*Egypt under the British Occupation.* A series of clashes between Orabi and Tawfik led to the military intervention of the British in the summer of 1882 to protect the interests of their bond-holders in Egypt's economy. Orabi led thousands of Egyptians in a bloody resistance against the British incursion. The public uprising worried the rich members of the Egyptian national front. The national movement therefore divided, Orabi was defeated, and the British occupied Egypt.

After the British entered Egypt, they restored the authority of Tawfik, but, in reality they controlled and ran the country. According to Peter Mansfield (1990:97), Egypt became "the most important link in Britain's imperial system," and the British officials responsible for the relationship between Egypt and Britain became the real rulers of Egypt. One of those officials, Evelyn Baring (known later as Lord Cromer), became the effective ruler of Egypt from 1883 to 1907.

Cromer set a tough financial control system over Egypt's budget to help pay Ismail's debt. Paying the debts absorbed more than half of Egypt's revenues. Cromer also limited the expenditures of the government on public works, especially on education. When Cromer retired in 1907, about 1.5 per cent of Egypt's population was receiving primary education as compared with 1.7 per cent in 1873, and the rest remained illiterate.

Cromer did not believe in Egyptians' ability to occupy high administrative posts. Rather, he counted on highly paid foreign administrative experts. Therefore, the number of Egyptians in the higher civil service posts declined. Yet, Cromer kept improving Egypt's irrigation system, and by the 1890s the Egyptian economy showed some signs of recovery.

When Tawfik died in 1892 he was succeeded by his son Abbas Hilmi, who constituted a major challenge to the British. Abbas Hilmi supported the growing Egyptian national movement led by Western-educated Egyptian nationalists, such as Mustafa Kamel. The movement could be seen as an extension of the national movement that mobilized Egypt at the end of the 1870s. However, the new movement was supported by new factors, such as an increasing number of Western-educated Egyptians and a more open political system under the British occupation, which supported freedom of the press.

## *2. Economic Life and Social Classes*

According to Charles Issawi (1993:177-190), during the nineteenth century Egypt witnessed an economic boom at many levels. The Egyptian population rose from 3 million in 1800 to about 10 million at the end of the nineteenth century. Total world investment in Egypt reached in 1914 about 200 million British pounds (the largest in the Middle East), of which 94 million pounds were public debt and the rest were investments in the private sector. Because of the Suez Canal, Egypt's location, and the growth of steamship navigation, Egypt's ports were main centers for international navigations, and domestic transportation improved dramatically. "In the late 1830s," Issawi noted (1993:181), "British, France, and Austrian steam navigation provided regular services to

Egypt, Syria, and Turkey.” Domestically, by 1913 total railway track in Egypt was 4,300 kilometers compared to 3,500 in the Ottoman Empire. Total trade in Egypt was higher than the world average. The cultivated land was tremendously expanded, and a small industrial base was established during Mohamed Ali’s regime. These improvements resulted from two main factors: the integration of Egypt into the world economy and the efforts of Mohamed Ali and his grandsons.

***Unequal Distribution of Wealth.*** Although those changes may have improved the level of living of the regular Egyptian during some periods, generally the level of living of the masses did not improve, and a huge gap separated the masses from the elite (Issawi 1993:177). This was due to several reasons. First, Egypt’s Turkish rulers counted on foreign elites (Turkish or European) in developing and running the country. Therefore, the fruits of any achieved progress went to the leading foreign elites and were hardly shared with the general public. Second, few public projects, such as education and health care, had a direct effect on the level of living of regular Egyptians. Unfortunately, those projects did not get enough attention from the rulers. Most of the investment went to improving the economy and the irrigation system, which mainly benefited the ruling class and the land-owners. Third, the lack of political institutions and constitutional rule hindered the rise of an Egyptian middle class that was capable of forcing the elites to share the fruits of development with the rest of society (Issawi 1993:188-190).

***Class Relations.*** Egypt’s economic conditions were clearly reflected in the class structure of Egyptian society. According to Roger Owen (1993:111-123), Egyptian society at the end of the nineteenth century was divided into two main groups, the elites

and the masses. The elites consisted of four sub-groups. The first sub-group was the Turkish governing elite, which was gradually integrated into Egyptian society, due to intermarriage and Arabacization; but it also controlled the government and the bureaucracy and owned vast properties. The second sub-group was the Europeans who came to Egypt to work in trade, in the bureaucracy, or with the British occupation. According to Roger Owen (1993:117), the number of Europeans living in Egypt rose from about 10,000 in 1838 to over 90,000 in 1881. The third sub-group was the Egyptian land-owners, many of them part of the royal family, notables, former high military officers, or former top bureaucrats. The fourth sub-group was the civil servants and bureaucrats. This group included an increasing number of Egyptians, especially those educated in Europe or in Western-style Egyptian educational institutions. On the other side, the masses consisted of the rest of the Egyptian population, many of them peasants and a few craftsmen and small traders in the cities.

According to Ehud Toledano (1990) and Amira Sonbol (2000), the division between the Egyptian elites and masses was strongly enforced and supported by a series of cultural norms and practices. The elites adopted a foreign culture (Turkish and then European languages) to separate themselves from the masses. The Egyptian masses (Muslims and Copts) kept their own Arabic-Egyptian culture that was “rooted in the Egyptian locale, replete with themes and images of both villages and city life in the Nile valley” (Toledano 1990:16-17).

Egyptians had to acquire the elites’ culture (Turkish or European) in order to climb up the social and class ladder. This meant joining Western-style educational



institutions, being educated in Europe, and interacting with Europeans on a regular basis. According to Ehud Toledano (1990:19), “only a minority among members of the [Egyptian] lower strata had access to any of these [qualifications].” On the other side, the Egyptian culture and way of live affected many of the elite (especially Turks) who gradually learned Arabic, married Egyptians, and considered themselves Egyptian.

“Members of the royal family and the upper classes who spoke Arabic preferred to use French as the language of prestige and sophistication. Their families, particularly the women, were taught French rather than Arabic, which was a way of keeping the classes distinct one from the other. ...using a foreign language in preference to Arabic mirrored a social structure in which a foreign elite and its indigenous allies were dominant.” (Amira Sonbol 2000:216)

### 3. *Ideological life*

Egypt was the most Westernized country in the nineteenth-century middle east. (Arthur Goldschmidt 2002:177)

At least three main ideologies dominated Egypt’s ideological life at the end of the nineteenth century; Islamic nationalism (pan-Islamism), Arab nationalism (pan-Arabism), and Egyptian nationalism. I will offer in the following paragraphs a short introduction to each of them.

***Pan-Islamism.*** Islamic nationalists, such as Jamal al-Din Al-Afghani and Mohamed Abduh (1849-1905), sought to unite all Muslims under one Islamic state (caliphate), over which a righteous Muslim ruler (a caliph) would preside. They also sought to reform the Muslim masses’ understanding of Islam, to encourage them to improve their lives and to revolt against the incursions of European colonialism (Adams 2000:13).

What was unique about the pan-Islamic thinkers was that they adopted a critical approach toward the way religion was studied and taught at their time. They were

addressing masses that were far from being Westernized. Therefore, they focused their attention on bridging the gap between the religious masses and the Westernized elites by trying to rationalize Muslims' understanding of Islam and make it compatible with modernity. They clashed with the orthodox religious institutions and adopted an open approach toward the West. They praised European civilization, affirmed the validity of science and of scientific knowledge, and favored constitutional and democratic reform (Esposito 1995, Keddie 1968:XVII & XVIII).

***Arab Nationalism.*** Arab nationalists saw Arabs, within the Muslim world, as a distinct nation that deserved to be united in one Arab state under an Arab government. According to Arthur Goldschmidt (2002:195), "Arab identity played no great part in Middle East politics up to the twentieth century." For most of the nineteenth century, Arabs felt loyal to the Islamic empire (the Ottomans). However, a series of important events led to the rise of anti-Turkish attitudes in the Arab world.

First, the Ottomans moved the center of the Islamic civilization for the first time since the rise of Islam away from the Arab world by adopting Constantinople as their capital. In addition, the Ottomans, as al-Afghani said (Imarah 1981:13), were "not good colonizers." The conditions of the Arab world deteriorated tremendously under the rule of the Ottomans, especially during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Second, in the middle of the nineteenth century the Ottoman Empire, seeking to reform itself, adopted a series of reforms called *Tanzimat*, which included introducing new legal codes and opening Western-style educational institutions. One result of these reforms was the rise of a young Ottoman generation that was more interested in reform

and in Turkish nationalism. The young Turkish nationalists angered the Arabs and motivated them to develop their own nationalism.

In addition, Arab nationalism, according to Arthur Goldschmidt (2002:195) spread more rapidly among Christian Arabs, who “were less likely to feel strong loyalty to the Ottoman Empire” and were more influenced by European liberal and nationalistic thought. Arab Christians were also more influenced by some schools built by American missionaries in Lebanon and Syria. Arab Muslims hesitated at the beginning to send their children to be educated at the American schools. Therefore, Arab Christians constituted the majority of the students of those schools, which were very influential in spreading liberal and nationalistic ideas. Eventually, Arab nationalism spread among Muslim nationalists, such as Abd al-Rahman al-Kawakibi, who represented “the first example of a truly Muslim strain within Arab nationalism” (2002:197).

***Egyptian Nationalism.*** Egyptian nationalists saw Egypt as a separate state within the Arab and Muslim worlds. They also called for an Egyptian government that truly represented the Egyptian people and culture.

The rise of Egyptian nationalism was a result of several factors. First, as explained before, since the sixteenth century Egypt was dominated by small non-native elites (Turks and then Europeans) that kept themselves culturally separate from native-born Egyptians, who were called *fellahin* (peasants). Second, a small number of Egyptians were able through time to acquire higher education, join the military and the bureaucracy, and climb the social ladder. Third, Egypt’s rulers, especially after the British occupation, used Egyptian nationalists and the Egyptian national movement as a

tool against the British. Fourth, new transportation projects, such as railways and telegraph lines, brought Egyptians closer and helped spread feelings of unity and nationalism. As a result of the previous factors, a growing Egyptian nationalistic movement grew. It included Egyptian soldiers, bureaucrats, and scholars. It also included some landowners, and some Europeans and Turks who identified themselves with the ambitions of the Egyptian people.

However, it seems that the leaders of the national movement could not overcome the gap that separated the Egyptian elite, to which they belonged, from the Egyptian masses. For example, the leaders of the national movement such, as Moustafa Kamel and Qasim Amin, were French-educated lawyers who were part of the Egyptian elite. They were not real representatives of the poor Egyptian peasants.

***Ideological Duality.*** It is important to note that the three ideological movements outlined above were inter-linked. For example, al-Afghani, the founder of the Islamic revival movement, was seen as one of the founders of the Egyptian national movement, although al-Afghani himself was not an Egyptian. In addition, an Arab nationalist, such as al-Kawakibi, and an Egyptian nationalist, such as Qasim Amin, had a great respect for Islamic teachings and civilization and for Islamic nationalism in general.

In addition, ideological movements in Egypt were marked throughout the nineteenth century by an institutional and cultural duality. This was because the need for learning from the more advanced West forced Egypt's rulers to adopt many European-style institutions (educational, industrial, judicial, etc.), while access to those institutions was limited to a very small minority of the Egyptian people. This duality influenced all

aspects of Egyptian life and divided the society into two main groups, a small Westernized elite and a vast traditional lower class (Cleveland 2000:100).

### **3) Conclusion**

The nineteenth century changed Egypt. At the beginning of the century, Egyptians in particular and Muslims in general came to realize the inferiority of their countries to the European countries. During the first four decades of the century, Mohamed Ali transformed Egypt to become a regional economic and political power. Yet, after several European nations united with the Ottoman Empire to defeat Mohamed Ali at the beginning of the 1840s, Egypt's conditions deteriorated again. This deterioration led to the occupation of Egypt by the British in 1882.

From these circumstances, four main phenomena important to our thesis emerged.

**First**, reform and development became one of the main objectives of Egypt, its successive governments, its intellectual leaders, and its people in general.

**Second**, the West played a dual role, both as an obstacle against and as a model for reform. This is because Europeans forced Egypt to open its markets to their products in an imbalanced economic relationship, allied with the Ottomans to defeat Mohamed Ali, enjoyed special economic and political privileges in Egypt, intervened in running the country politically and economically, and militarily occupied Egypt twice. In addition, foreigners who came to Egypt to trade, to work with the British colonization, or to work as experts and aides for the successive Egyptian governments were part of an elite class that enjoyed special economic and political privileges in Egypt. At the ideological level, the Egyptian higher class used the European languages, education, and style of life to

strengthen its control over and separation from the great majority of the Egyptian masses. In other words, Egypt's rulers and higher classes used their knowledge of European sciences, technologies, and languages to further oppress the Egyptian masses.

On the positive side, successive Egyptian governments looked up to Europe as a model for progress and development. Thus, they sent Egyptian students to learn in Europe, hired European aides and experts to improve their governments, and opened Western-style educational systems. In addition, the struggle between the Egyptian governments and the British colonization after 1882 led the Egyptian governments to empower some segments of the Egyptian national front in order to be able use them as a leverage against the British, who forced the Egyptian governments to open up their political system and to loosen their control over the Egyptian press. This led to an atmosphere of relative freedom at the end of the nineteenth century, praised by later generations' reformers, such as Qasim Amin and Abd Al-Rahman Al-Kawakibi.

*Third*, the various attempts to reform Egypt failed in democratizing the Egyptian governments. At the end of the nineteenth century, Egypt was governed by a small group of rulers who were descendents of Mohamed Ali's family. These rulers, supported by a wider but still small elite, had hegemony over the vast majority of Egypt's economic resources. They also separated themselves from the Egyptian masses socially and culturally. It may be true that some members of the ruling elite eventually assimilated into Egyptian society and considered themselves to be Egyptians, yet what was clear was that native Egyptians had very little say in running their country compared with the members of this elite.

Egypt's political elite had a dual approach toward the West. First, they rejected the pressures of the West on them to open their country politically and economically. In this regard, they were willing to empower the Egyptian national front to use it as leverage against the interventions of the West. On the other hand, the Egyptian governments were never willing to share power with the masses. Moreover, successive Egyptian governments were willing to use their knowledge of European culture, languages, and sciences to strengthen their hegemony over the Egyptian masses.

**Fourth**, reform failed to improve the conditions of the great majority of the Egyptian masses, who were left economically impoverished, illiterate, socially conservative, and politically weak. In this regard, the Egyptian masses were victimized by Western colonialism, by their Muslim regimes, and by their personal weakness and lack of opportunities.

In the next chapters, I will show how these phenomena shaped the Occidental discourses of three influential intellectual leaders, Jamal Al-Din Al-Afghani, Qasim Amin, and Abd Al-Rahman Al-Kawakbi, who lived in Egypt at the end of the nineteenth century.

### Chapter 3

#### **The Occidental Discourse of Jamal Al-Din Al-Afghani**

The activities of this remarkable man [Afghani] thus encompassed practically all the lands of Islam and also those European Countries the governments of which are involved in the affairs of Muhammadan peoples. Afghanistan, Persia, Turkey, Egypt, India, all, at one time or another, experienced his potent contact and were affected by it. (Adams 2000:12)

The goal of this chapter is to analyze the Occidental discourse of Jamal al-Din al-Afghani (1838-1897), who was one of the most influential and charismatic leaders of the Muslim world during the 1870s and who contributed to the future of Egypt in particular and of the Muslim world in general in several important ways, which I will explain in detail in the following paragraphs.

In this regard, the study argues that Afghani's Occidental discourse was part of his larger understanding of reform and how it should be achieved. It also argues that Afghani's interest in revolutionary political change and his willingness to work in unity with the Muslim governments and masses led him to promote many anti-Western views. The same factors also led Afghani to deemphasize his appreciation of the Western civilization and sciences when talking to Muslims and to focus instead on highlighting the threat Western colonialism posed to the Muslim world.

To prove the previous argument I will start with an overview of Afghani's life and ideas about reform. Then I will analyze how Afghani viewed the West in general and America in particular. I will also examine Afghani's views regarding the role of religion, particularly Islam, in the relationship between Islam and the West. I will conclude the chapter by summarizing the main characteristics of Afghani's Occidental discourse.



### *1) Afghani's Life*

What are unique about Afghani's life, in addition to his wide influence, were his continuous attempts to combine religious reform with political change. In this regard, Afghani, whose national origin and religious background are disputed (as some scholars believe that Afghani is a Sunni Muslim born and raised in Afghanistan and many others claim that he is a Shi'i Muslim born and raised in Persia) led a very active and productive life as a religious scholar who wanted to use his religious knowledge and political charisma to reform the thinking and circumstances of his contemporary Muslims (Keddie 1968:4). Today, Afghani is seen as the founder of the Islamic reform movement that spread all over the Muslim world in the second half of the nineteenth century, as the chief agitator against the incursion of European colonialism into the Muslim world during his life, and as the founder of the national movements in several Muslim countries, such as Egypt, Persia, and Turkey.

Afghani lived the life of a traveler, who toured the Muslim world and Europe advocating his ideas and beliefs and looking for alliances (among the political elites, the religious scholars, and the masses) that could help him put his ideas into practice. "Afghani," Arthur Goldschmidt, Jr. (2002:180) noted, "pops up in almost every political movement that stirred in the Middle East in the late nineteenth century." At the beginning of the 1860s, Afghani lived in Afghanistan and participated in the civil war that was fought between the sons of Afghanistan's deceased ruler, Mohamed Khan. Afghani allied himself with one of the fighting brothers, Mohamed Azam, who was defeated by Shir Ali, who was supported by the British. In 1869, Afghani left Afghanistan and went on a

tour, during which he briefly visited India, Egypt (forty days), Mecca, and Constantinople. In Constantinople, Afghani was warmly received by the Ottoman sultan, Abd al-Hamid and the leading scholars. Then, and as usual in Afghani's life, he quickly gained fame and influence in the intellectual and political circles of his place of residence, but he also gained the envy and animosity of the ruling elite (both scholars and politicians). In March 1871, Afghani was forced to leave Constantinople for Egypt, where he stayed until September 1879.

Afghani's years in Egypt were some of his life's most fruitful years for several reasons (Keddie 1968:1-35). First, the 1870s in Egypt were a time when the negative influence of European colonialism was being widely felt by the Egyptian masses. It was during the 1870s when Egypt's debt to Europeans rose dramatically and was followed by more European economic and political pressures on Egypt. Second, the 1870s were a time when an Egyptian national movement rose in popularity and sought to reform the country and to protect it against the incursion of the Europeans. Third, Egypt in the 1870s was one of the most modernized countries in the Middle East. Egypt had a large number of scholars and strong Islamic institutions (for example, Al-Azhar). Egypt also acted as an intellectual center for the Middle East, to which non-Egyptian Arab and Muslim intellectuals migrated to live and preach their ideas. For all the previous reasons, Egypt was a fertile soil for Afghani's ideas, which focused on reforming Islamic thinking and on uniting Muslims against the incursions of the European nations.

Yet this did not mean that Afghani's presence and activism in Egypt were welcomed by everybody. Afghani's ideas created many enemies among two main groups.

First, Afghani sought to reform Islamic thinking and education by emphasizing reason and rational thinking, teaching philosophy and natural sciences, and criticizing the stagnation of religious thinking and institutions at his time. Therefore, Afghani's ideas gained many opponents among the Orthodox religious classes, who disagreed with Afghani's liberal and philosophical approach to religion. Second, Afghani mixed his religious ideas with a direct call to the Muslim masses and to the religious scholars for action. Afghani, according to Keddie (1968:35), "helped organize and disseminate such tools of modern political action and education as the journal of opinion, the leaflet, and the secret political society, all of which have been important in changing the face of the Muslim world." Afghani's political activism ultimately alarmed Egypt's political elite. Khedive Ismail welcomed Afghani and protected him. Yet soon after Ismail was forced to give up his chair to his son (Tawfiq), Afghani was expelled from Egypt.

After leaving Egypt, Afghani spent two years in India. Then he was expelled from India. He went to France, where he stayed for three years. According to Charles Adams (2000:8), Afghani engaged during his stay in Paris in a kind of "international propaganda," to defend his agenda in Europe and to spread it from Europe to the Muslim world. In France, Afghani published editorials in the French press, engaged French writers, such as Ernest Renan, in intellectual dialogue on Islam and Islamic civilization. Thus, Afghani was perceived as an advocate for Muslim issues throughout Europe. In addition, Afghani worked with his closest Egyptian disciple (Mohamed Abduh) on publishing a weekly Arabic magazine that lasted for seven months. The magazine, called *Al-Urwah al-Wathkah (the Indissoluble Bond)*, was printed in Paris and distributed

throughout the Muslim world. The main goal of the magazine was to arouse Muslims against the incursions of the European colonialism. This pushed the British to ban the magazine from entering Egypt or India. Yet the magazine was distributed secretly and had a wide influence.

After the collapse of the magazine in 1884, Afghani traveled to Britain and then went to Russia and stayed there for four years. In 1889 he traveled to Persia and worked closely with the Persian shah for some time. In about 1891 Afghani was expelled from Persia. Then Afghani went to Baghdad, then to London. In 1892 Afghani was welcomed by the Ottoman sultan Abd al-Hamid in Constantinople, where Afghani stayed in “gilded captivity” until his death in 1897 (Adams 2000:12).

## *2) Afghani's View of Reform*

The Europeans have now put their hands on every part of the world. The English have reached Afghanistan; the French have seized Tunisia. In reality this usurpation, aggression, and conquest has not come from the French or the English. Rather it is science that everywhere manifests its greatness and power. Ignorance had no alternative to prostrating itself humbly before science and acknowledges its submission. In reality sovereignty has never left the abode of science. However, this true ruler is continually changing capitals. Sometimes it has moved from East to West, and other times from West to East. (Keddie 1968:102-103)

Afghani devoted his life and ideas to reforming Muslims' conditions at two main levels: the religious and political. At the religious level, Afghani's ideas centered on the importance of teaching modern sciences and philosophy to Muslims. In this regard, he criticized the Orthodox Islamic scholars for "dividing science into two parts: one they call Muslim science, and one European science," which led them to forbid Muslims to learn "some useful sciences." He also criticized the new schools that were opened in some Muslim countries, such as Egypt, to teach modern sciences for being incapable of spreading the spirit of knowledge and learning among Muslims. According to Afghani, what was lacking in both the traditional and the modern schools was the teaching of philosophy. Afghani defined philosophy as "the science that deals with the state of external beings, and their causes, reason, needs, and requisites" (Keddie 1968:105-106). But in general, Afghani meant the teaching of the spirit of scientific inquiry, the teaching of logic, and the spread of the rational way of thinking.

At the political level, Afghani's ideas centered around two main notions. The first notion was Afghani's belief in Islam's ability to provide Muslims with an ideology that was capable of uniting them under the leadership of the Muslim caliphate and of encouraging them to change their circumstances (Imarah 1981:28-29). Throughout his

writings, Afghani emphasized Islam's call for Muslims to unite. He repeatedly quoted Quraniq verses that call on Muslims to unite with each other and to consider other Muslims as their brothers and sisters. He also called upon his contemporary Muslims to consider Islam as the only source of nationalism. "Muslims," Afghani emphasized (Imarah 1981:35), "regardless of their countries, stay away from nationalities. They reject every kind of nationalism except Islamic nationalism. Once a believer in Islam truly believes, he would care less about his race and people [and care more about his religious link with other Muslims]."

Afghani blamed the disunity of Muslims on two main factors. The first factor was the Muslim rulers who, according to Afghani, cared about remaining in power and their prestige more than they cared about the interests of the Muslim masses. "The princes of the Orient," Afghani (Imarah 1981:293) noted, "don't care about what their titles really refer to. However, they care about having glorious titles and prestigious names. If an Eastern ruler loses his entire dynasty and money, and loses all his rights, but keeps his title he would be happy and would not care about what he lost."

He also criticized the Muslim rulers, especially the Ottoman caliphs, for depending on foreign (European and non-Muslim) aides in running the Muslim countries more than they depended on Muslim assistants. He believed that the foreign experts or aides did not care enough about the real interests of the Muslim nations because their loyalties belonged to their original countries and peoples (Imarah 1981:48). He also believed that the Muslim countries should be governed only by two kinds of elites, the first being their own native leaders, who care about the interests of their own native

people, and the second being the Muslim elites, even if they are foreigners, because Muslim elites should always care about the interests of Muslim masses in general (Imarah 1981:47-48).

The second factor that led to the disunity of Muslims, according to Afghani, was the lack of unity among the Muslim masses. In this regard, Afghani expressed frequently his disappointment in the lack of communication and caring among Muslims. "I cannot understand," Afghani wondered (Imarah 1981:289), "how the Muslim nations reached this stage of lack of communication and ignorance about each other although they are geographically connected and close. Afghanis know and care very little about their Iranian brothers. And both Afghanis and Iranians hardly know anything about what is going on in India."

Afghani believed that unity among the Muslim masses worldwide should start in the Islamic religious circles and schools (Imarah 1981:65). He also believed that the scholars were more capable than others of solving their differences, learning about other Muslim nations, and spreading Islamic unity and news among the Muslim masses. He felt that educating Muslims about their religious link with and duties toward other Muslims and educating them about the circumstances and suffering of other Muslims were first steps toward Islamic unity worldwide.

Afghani's second main political goal was to agitate Muslims against European, specifically British, colonialism, especially in Egypt and in India. Most of Afghani's Arabic political writings focused on describing the negative intentions of the British incursions into India and Egypt, on prescribing the actual and potential negative effects of

those incursions, and on urging Muslims to unite with each other and to revolt against the British. Afghani's familiarity with East Asia and with the British occupation of India made him play the role of an alarmist against the British occupation all over the Arab world. "Whoever travels through the British colonies, like India," Afghani warned (Imarah 1981:117), "can clearly see that the masses of those countries were subjugated to endless and immeasurable amounts of taxes and to temporary and permanent tariffs." He also believed that the British intentionally divided the political elites of the countries they occupied in order to weaken them.

Therefore, Afghani repeatedly (Imarah 1981:161) warned the Egyptian khedive and the Ottoman caliph that Britain's true intention was to occupy Egypt, which he considered (Imarah 1981:142) to be the "the most important Muslim nation" and the key to the Muslim East. Afghani's message was at a time, in the late 1870s, when the true nature and intentions of the British incursion in Egypt were not clear or articulated. In response, Afghani was always disappointed with the lack of action on the part of the Ottoman and Egyptian rulers when it came to defending Egypt against the British invasion (Imarah 1981:155, 234).



### *3) Afghani's Occidental Discourse*

In the two previous sections I have explained how Afghani's life and view of reform led him to try to utilize his religious knowledge and political charisma to encourage the Muslim masses to work with their governments to reform their conditions. Afghani also lived at a time when Western colonialism was spreading quickly in the Muslim world. Afghani used his prior knowledge of the circumstances of some Eastern European colonies, India in particular, to warn Egyptians against the threat of British colonialism. In this section, I will explain how these views influenced Afghani's Occidental discourse and led him to hide his appreciation of some aspects of Western civilization.

#### *1. Afghani's Appreciation of Western Civilization*

In May 1883, Afghani wrote an article in a French journal called *Journal des Debats*, responding to an article written by the French thinker Ernest Renan. According to Nikki R. Keddie (1968:85), Renan, in his article, accused Islam of being "hostile to the scientific and philosophic spirit." He also criticized Arabs for being more hostile to science and philosophy than other Muslim nations. In response, Afghani wrote an article asking Renan to recognize the role Arabs played in leading the Muslim civilization and world and the role Muslims played in preserving and developing the sciences and philosophies originated by earlier civilizations, such as the Greeks, the Romans, and Persians.

The Arabs. ...took up what had been abandoned by the civilized nations, rekindled the extinguished sciences, developed them and gave them a brilliance they had never had. Is not this the index and proof of their natural love for sciences? It is true that the Arabs took from the Greeks their philosophy as they stripped the Persians of what made their fame in antiquity; but these sciences, which they usurped by right of conquest, they developed, extended, clarified, perfected, completed, and coordinated with a perfect taste and a rare precision and exactitude. Besides, the French, the Germans, and the English were not so far from Rome and Byzantium as were the Arabs, whose capital was Baghdad. It was therefore easier for the former to exploit the scientific treasures that were buried in these two great cities. They made no effort in this direction until Arab civilization lit up with its reflection the summits of the Pyrenees and poured its light and riches on the Occident. (Keddie 1968:184-185)

What is striking about Afghani's French article was that it included pro-Western views that were hardly expressed in Afghani's Arabic writings. In the French article, Afghani adopted an evolutionary view of the role religion plays in society. He believed that nations "Muslim, Christian, or pagan" at their birth are incapable of fully using "pure reason" to guide their own masses. Instead, nations use religious dogma to subjugate the masses and direct them. Therefore, nations, once mature enough, should adopt a more scientific and philosophical way of thinking (Keddie 1968:182-184). This evolutionary perspective led Afghani to admit some Occidental ideas that he never mentioned in his Arabic articles. First, he admitted that Muslim societies, like all Christian societies, should follow the evolutionary march from barbarism to advanced civilization. Second, he admitted that Islam at a certain point was an obstacle to the development of sciences. "In truth," Afghani said (Keddie 1968:183), "the Muslim religion has tried to stifle science and to stop its progress. It has thus succeeded in halting the philosophical or intellectual movement and in turning minds from the search for scientific truth." Third, he believed that Christian societies had advanced toward civilization more than the Muslim ones because they earlier freed themselves more from religion.

All religions are intolerant, each one in its way. The Christian religion, I mean the society that follows its inspirations and its teachings and is formed in its image, has emerged from the first period to which I have just alluded; thenceforth free and independent, it seems to advance rapidly on the road of progress and science, whereas Muslim society has not yet freed itself from the tutelage of religion. ...I cannot help from hoping that Muhammadan society will succeed someday in breaking its bonds and marching resolutely in the path of civilization after the manner of Western society. (Keddie 1968:183)

The fact that Afghani hardly mentioned such Occidental perspectives in his Arabic writings, as I will show later, led some scholars, such as Nikki R. Keddie (1968:90), to accuse him of using double discourse, one directed toward the Muslim masses and the other directed toward Westerners. When speaking to the Muslim masses, Keddie believed that Afghani was more willing to use religion and religious discourse to motivate the masses politically. When talking to Westerners, Keddie thought (1968:90), Afghani used a more rational and philosophical approach that refrained from using religion. Regardless of the accuracy of Keddie's hypothesis, it is clear that Afghani's Occidental discourse when talking to Western audience was quite different from his Occidental discourse oriented toward the Muslim masses.

## *2. Afghani's Occidental Discourse When Talking to Muslims*

Most of Afghani's Arabic Occidental discourse focused on one main goal, to encourage Arab Muslims to revolt against the British incursions in Egypt and India. To achieve his goal, Afghani developed and spread three main images of the West.

I will start with describing the British individual, in summary: he is possessed of little intelligence, steadfast, greedy and dissatisfied, stubborn, patient, and arrogant. The Arab or the Oriental is possessed of great intelligence, irresolute, satisfied, fearful, impatient, and humble. The British insists on his wrong opinion even if he has hastily said it. The Oriental will not insist on his correct opinion or on seeking his own rights. Therefore, the former (the British) will always overcome the latter because of his perseverance. And the latter (the Oriental) will lose all his rights because of his lack of patience. (Imarah 1981:75)

The first image dealt with the British/Western individual in contrast to the Muslim/Oriental individual. At this level Afghani could not hide his admiration of the character of the European individual. He saw Westerners as risk-taking people who are willing to challenge their own selves and their surrounding circumstances in order to achieve their goals. In contrast, he saw Easterners as ignorant and fearful people who complain too much but lack the patience and resolve needed to achieve their goals. On the other hand, he accused Westerners of being greedy people seeking to exploit the resources of the weaker nations. He also accused the Western individual of being deceptive and unwilling to admit his mistakes even if he is sure about them. In contrast he saw Muslims as less ambitious people, who are not willing to stand up for their rights even when they feel that they are treated unjustly.

The British, as a nation, no body can deny that they are one of the most civilized nations. They know the meaning of justice, and apply it; but only in their country, with the British, with themselves. (Imarah 1981:85)

The second image, which is the most widespread Occidental image in Afghani's writings, dealt with the British as a nation in its relations with the Muslim countries. At this level Afghani held his most anti-Western views. First, He saw the British society as a racist society that knew the true meaning of justice and human rights but applied them only among its own people. Second, he saw Britain as a greedy nation seeking to exploit others. Third, Afghani's most repeated image of the West is the image of Britain as a deceptive nation that skillfully hid its greed and animosity toward the Muslim/Eastern countries. In this regard, Afghani spoke constantly about how the British intervened in the Muslim nations under the guise of helping and supporting the Muslim masses and

rulers. However, as Afghani believed, the true intention of the British was to divide the Muslim societies and rule them. Afghani believed that the British hid their true intentions not only because they were evil, but also because the British disliked wars and preferred to take over the Muslim countries through political manipulation and economic control. Afghani also believed that the British tended to hide their intentions in order to minimize Muslims' resistance to their incursions and because they were militarily weak, especially in wars on land. He saw the British military as a weak military that lacked courage and that could be easily defeated if it was met with reasonable resistance by the Muslim masses.

Afghani believed that whenever the British entered a Muslim country they showed great respect to the country, its people, and its culture. They presented themselves as the best friends of the Muslim masses and the rulers. Then the British would start to agitate the various segments of the Muslim societies and elites against each other. They would provide the Muslim rulers with loans and weapons that they could use to fight their rival Muslim elites. Then, when all the various segments of the Muslim society were weak and defeated, the British intervened to impose their financial and military control over the Muslim countries. Therefore, Afghani advised Muslims repeatedly not to believe or trust the British.

The British controlled about one third of the world without shedding much of their blood or spending lots of money. ...They did that by using the weapon of deception and dishonesty. They enter the countries and nations as cruel lions covered with the soft skin of snakes. They introduce themselves as honest servants and trustworthy aids, who only care about enforcing security and [providing] relief, improving order, stabilizing regimes, enforcing laws, empowering sultans, and through other types of tricks and conspiracies. When they want to intervene in the affairs of an Eastern country and find out that this country is ruled by a strong intelligent governor, and when this righteous

Muslim governor starts to hinder their plans and delay their march toward their goal, they begin to agitate his people against him. ...They encourage his enemies. ...They induce some members of the ruling family to revolt against and challenge him. This will give them the opportunity to intervene in the fight between the ruler and his competitors.

They may also do what they did with the Indians, when they spread all over the country as traders and trading companies. ...Then, they divided the world of Indian rulers and encouraged each Indian prince (*raja*) to seek independence from the country [India] until the country got dismantled into small dynasties. Then they encouraged each prince to fight against another prince seeking to defeat him and to take over his dynasty. Ultimately, the vast Indian lands became a stage for fighting and every prince fell in need for money and soldiers to defend his dynasty or to overcome his [Indian] enemy. At that time, the British [deceptively] intervened with open hearts to lend a hand to the fighting parties. (Imarah 1981:290)

Once the British controlled a Muslim country, as Afghani prescribed, they started to dismantle its military and to fire the native employees from the administrative sector. They depended on foreigners in running the country. They cut spending on education and health care and devoted most of the country's resources to paying its mounting debt. This scenario would lead the whole country, as Afghani predicted, into poverty and deprivation.

Two years ago [the British] entered Egypt, the land of peace and tranquility, at a time when the Egyptians were living in good economic conditions and in security. Today, because of the British justice and the good British administration, Egypt became the land of conspiracies, and the land of corruption and disorder. The [British] justice ruled to deprive thousands of citizens and to expel them from their government jobs, while they have children and have no other source of income. And the British replaced them with British employees. The market went into recession. The farmers could not work in their fields because of the lack of security and the spread of rioting. ...Poverty dominated the farmers and they became unable to pay their debts and unable to pay their due taxes to the government (Imarah 1981:148).

In contrast to this image, Afghani saw Easterners as ignorant, unsophisticated people, who were easily deceived by the British at the beginning. Yet Afghani believed that Easterners came to realize quickly the negative effect of European colonialism on

them at all levels. At the same time, Afghani complained frequently about the lack of action on behalf of the Muslim masses when it came to revolting against the British. He also criticized the Ottoman and Egyptian rulers constantly for their lack of action to defend Egypt.

The third image dealt with the relations among the European governments, especially the relations between the British and the French. At this level Afghani liked to refer to the existence of competition and animosity among the European nations over the control of the East. He believed that the European countries were driven in their internal competition with each other by their national interests and ambitions. In the early months following Britain's occupation of Egypt in 1882, Afghani hoped that the other European powers would force Britain to withdraw from or ease its control over Egypt. When Europe failed to pressure Britain, Afghani expressed his huge disappointment.

The previous paragraphs reveal several important facts about Afghani's Occidental discourse. First, they show that Afghani liked and hated the West simultaneously. He liked Western philosophy and sciences and the character of the Western individual and at the same time hated Western colonialism and its manipulations of the resources of the Muslim world. This ambivalent attitude, in addition to Afghani's circumstance and view of reform, led him to hide his appreciation of the Western philosophy and sciences, to simultaneously praise and mock the character of the Western individual, and to use double discourse, one when talking to Muslims and the other when talking to Westerners.

#### *4) Afghani's View of America*

Afghani used America to enforce his preconceived ideas about Western colonialism as a heartless system that was willing to discriminate against all of its colonies and that could only be resisted by the force of public uprisings. In this regard, Afghani only mentioned America twice in the Arabic writings I surveyed. In the first case, Afghani spoke proudly about Americans as an example of a people who revolted against British colonialism. Afghani (Imarah 1981:73) called George Washington “the great General Washington” because of Washington’s role in leading the American independence movement from the British. Afghani also spoke about how the British and Americans shared the same religion, Christianity, and how this fact did not protect the Americans from British injustice. He spoke about how the British kept imposing more taxes on the Americans until the latter decided to revolt. The American Revolution, for Afghani, was a proof that complaining against British injustice would not lead Muslims anywhere unless they revolted against the British as the Americans did.

In the second instance, Afghani referred to America as the place to which the Irish immigrated, running away from the religious persecution of the British (Imarah 1981:147). In this instance, Afghani was trying to give another example of the injustice of the British and that the British were willing to persecute their colonies’ masses, even if the colonized masses were Christian.



### ***5) Role of Islam in Afghani's Occidental Discourse***

The essence of the East's problem is the fight between the Easterner and the Westerner while each of them is putting on (disguised with) a religious disguise. The Westerner uses Christianity as a cause. The Easterner uses Islam. However, the peoples of the two religions resemble two deaf machines controlled by the hands of their movers. Those who dominate Christianity manipulate religion for the sake of the worldly life and they know the matters of their worldly life and what it requires. Those who practice Islam manipulate their worldly life for the sake of religion and because they don't follow their religion's guidance they lose both. (Imarah 1981:9)

In general, Afghani did not believe that Europe and the Muslim world were engaged in a religious war. He believed that the struggle between the East and the West was a struggle over power and resources and believed that whoever owned more knowledge and power could overcome and subjugate the other. Afghani (Imarah 1981:13) considered the Ottomans to be colonizers the same as the British and the Europeans. Moreover, he (Imarah 1981:16) saw the Ottomans as bad colonizers who had only mastered the art of war and did not know how to build civilizations. This is why he felt that it was normal for the Ottomans' colonies to revolt against the Ottoman rulers. He also believed that if the Ottomans were good colonizers they would have kept their various colonies under their control even if the masses of those colonies were not Muslim.

In addition, Afghani thought that the British were mainly driven by their interests and greed and that they treated weaker nations unjustly even if they were Christian. For a proof, Afghani referred to the example of the British persecution of the Americans and of the Catholic Irish. He also referred to the continuous competition among the European nations over wealth and resources although all of them were Christian.

Therefore, Afghani did not really believe that the European colonization of the Muslim world was pushed by religious motives. Yet Afghani, in a few instances, used religiously loaded language to agitate Muslims against the British. For instance, Afghani (Imarah 1981:143) described the British as “the enemy of Muslims” who were pushed by “strong animosity” to dominate the Muslim nations. In the same instance, Afghani described Britain’s domination of Muslims as a way to “take revenge from the religion [Islam].” In another instance, Afghani (Imarah 1981:235) warned Muslims that “every Muslim should know that it is its [Britain’s] intention to end this religion [Islam] and its people [Muslims] from the earth.” In a third case, Afghani accused Britain of using religion to create divisions between the Sudanese, who were Muslims, and the people of Ethiopia (*Habasha*), who were Christian. Fourth, Afghani (Imarah 1981:293) accused the British of discriminating against Muslims and denying them jobs in the Indian government because of their Islamic religion.

### ***6) Conclusion: General Characteristics of Afghani's Occidental Discourse***

I conclude this chapter by highlighting some key characteristics of Jamal al-Din al-Afghani's Occidental discourse.

First, Afghani lived in Egypt at a time, during the 1870s, when Western pressures on Egypt were real and were widely felt. Those pressures could be traced to the beginnings of the 1840s, when several European countries allied with the Ottoman Empire to put an end to Mohamed Ali's attempt to modernize Egypt. They were also felt during the 1850s, 1860s, and 1870s, when Egypt increasingly fell in debt to Europeans, who forced Egypt to appoint European observers over its economy. In addition, Afghani was able to predict the European occupation of Egypt that started three years after he left Egypt and lasted for more than seven decades.

Second, Afghani saw reform as the solution to Muslims' decay and to the threats of European colonialism. He believed Muslims can reform their circumstances if they reform their understanding of Islam in a way that leads them to improve their circumstances and to unite together under the leadership of a righteous Muslim caliphate. He also believed that once Muslims reformed their thinking and unite together they would be able to resist Western colonialism. To achieve this goal, Afghani devoted his life to educating the Muslim masses and governments about his ideas and to warn them against the threat of Western colonialism.

Third, despite Afghani's negative views of Western colonialism and its policies toward the Muslim world, he still looked up to Europe as a model of civilization that Muslims could learn from. In this regard, Afghani liked Western sciences, philosophy,

and rationality. He also praised the Western individual for being active, independent, and risk-taking.

Fourth, to serve his reform project, Afghani used several discourse tactics to mobilize his information about the West and force Westerners to fit his agenda. In this regard, Afghani used the following distinct discourse strategies:

He used double discourse, one when talking to Muslims and another when talking to Westerners in order to remain consistent before his Muslim audience. When talking to Muslims Afghani emphasized his negative views of the West and deemphasized his positive ones.

Afghani exaggerated the weakness of the British soldiers and militaries in order to encourage Muslims to revolt against the British. He also exaggerated the readiness of Muslims to revolt against the British. He described Easterners as people who hated the British very much and saw no benefit or hope in the British occupation. He encouraged the Egyptian and Ottoman rulers to revolt against the British, promising them that if they revolted against the British, the Muslim masses would join and support them. He over-emphasized the weakness of the British military and the animosity that other European countries held against the British. In response, his expectations always fell short and he constantly ended up expressing disappointment, especially regarding the lack of action on behalf of the Muslim masses and rulers.

Afghani used binary language to contrast the character of the Western individual with the character of the Eastern individual. In this regard, Afghani believed that

Westerners were more active and resolute than Easterners. But he still believed that Westerners were greedy, stubborn, and deceptive.

Although Afghani viewed America as a Christian nation, he saw America in a different and more positive light than the rest of Western countries. Afghani viewed America mainly as a country that was colonized by Europe. By doing so, he associated America with the Muslim countries that were subjugated by European colonialism. He also introduced America to the Muslim world as a positive model of a country that freed itself from colonialism.

Although Afghani did not believe that Western policies were motivated by religion, he used religion a few times to agitate Muslims against the British. Deep in his mind Afghani did not consider religion to be the main cause for the conflict between the West and the Muslim world, as he believed that politics were motivated by political and materialistic motives and interests more than anything else. Yet Afghani provides a dangerous example of how religion can be used as a political means to agitate the Muslim masses. Afghani's political character and tendencies made him use religion in a few instances to agitate the Muslim masses against the British by portraying Britain as a nation whose policies in the Muslim world encompassed deep animosity to Islam and Muslims.

## Chapter 4

### The Occidental Discourse of Qasim Amin

The objective of this chapter is to analyze the Occidental discourse of Qasim Amin (1863-1908), who is considered to be one of the main founders of Arab liberalism in general and of the Arab women's liberation movement in particular. Amin's Occidental views are unique and stimulating not only because of his intellectual influence but also because of his willingness to stand up to some of his time's most powerful social and cultural taboos, especially regarding the role of women in the Muslim societies. In addition, Amin saw the West as a model that should be mimicked at the social and cultural level, an idea that was unpopular at his time.

To explain the factors that shaped Amin's Occidental views, I argue that Amin's personal and historical circumstances, his view of reform that despised politics and focused instead on social and cultural reform, and his willingness to stand up against the will of public opinion allowed him to advocate Occidental views that were uncommon and unpopular at his time. In this regard, Amin who wanted his Egyptian audience to look up to Europe as a model for social and cultural reform, manipulated the information he had about the West, deemphasized his critiques of the negative effects of Western colonialism on the East, stressed his appreciation of Western civilization and culture, and used double discourse, one when talking to Muslims and the other when talking to Westerners, in order to remain consistent before his Muslim audience.

To illustrate the previous argument, I will start this chapter with an overview of Amin's life and main ideas. Then I will analyze Amin's views of the West in general and

of the United States in particular. I will also examine Amin's understanding of the role religion plays in the relationship between Islam and the West. I will conclude this chapter by highlighting some key characteristics of Amin's Occidental discourse.

### *1) Amin's Life*

I don't write to gain the praise of the ignorant or of the masses, who, if they listen to the words of Allah, whose words are eloquent and whose meanings are clear, would not understand them unless they are distorted by the opinion of a religious scholar, who is the most ignorant among all people about his religion; and who [the masses] don't love their country unless it looks in their eyes in an ugly picture, in wrong ethics, and in idiot traditions. However, I write to the people of knowledge. In particular [I write] to the new generation, who are our hope for the future (Imarah 1989:421).

Amin lived a life of an intellectual who stayed away from politics and devoted his life to social and cultural reform. In this regard, Amin cared for the masses, but he was not willing to hold his ideas captive to the masses' conservative agenda. Instead, Amin introduced social and cultural ideas that were taboos at his time and hoped that the next generations would understand him and benefit from his ideas. Several factors led Amin to think this way.

First, Amin could be considered part of the Egyptian elite that held new and different ideas from the rest of scholars and the conservative masses. Amin was born in Egypt in 1863 to a Turkish father who worked as a high officer in the Egyptian military, and an aristocratic Egyptian mother. Amin acquired an undergraduate degree in law in 1881 and traveled to France in the same year to study law for four years. After his return to Egypt in 1885, Amin worked as a public prosecutor and then as a judge. He wrote articles in the Egyptian press and authored two books on the status of women's rights in Egypt.

Amin's writings on women's rights, which were widely criticized at his time, made him one of the main, if not the main, modern founders of the women's liberation movement in the Arab world. Amin was a known figure in the Egyptian national movement. He also worked closely with Saad Zaghloul, one of the main leaders of the Egyptian national movement during the first quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

One can argue that Amin's aristocratic background and his life and education in Europe at a young age introduced him to ideas that were not very common among Egyptians, the majority of whom were illiterate, conservative, and impoverished. However, it is also important to note that Amin's aristocratic background did not alienate him from the difficult conditions and suffering of the Egyptian masses. He always considered himself an Egyptian, who was concerned about the welfare of the poor Egyptian masses. These attitudes could be partly explained by Amin's association as a youth with Jamal al-Din al-Afghani and his intellectual circle at the end of the 1870s. Amin also met and worked closely in France with some of Al-Afghani's associates, who were expelled from Egypt after the national uprising in 1882. In addition, Amin's writings were always colored with a humanistic social philosophy that focused his attention on the miseries of the poor Egyptian masses and kept him busy looking for solutions for such miseries.

Second, Amin spoke with optimism about the political life of Egypt at the end of the 1890s, when he published his two books. He believed that Tawfiq and Abbas were constitutional rulers, who granted Egyptians many freedoms (Imarah 1989:243). He also believed that the conditions of Egypt had been improving in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup>



century, especially since the Orabi public uprising in 1882. Once the British occupation forced the Egyptian governments to open up their political systems and to lessen their control over the Egyptian press some intellectuals, such as Qasim Amin, were convinced that Egyptians enjoyed enough political freedoms and needed instead to focus on social and cultural reform.

Third, Amin despised politics in general and felt that Egyptians spent too much time on politics while neglecting the need to reform their social and cultural circumstances.

The freedom to criticize has been used so far in criticizing the works of the government because this new tone (political criticism) amuses the listeners and opens their hearts and buckets. But when it comes to the other issues; the religious [issues], the social [issues], the [issues] related to personal affairs, habits, and ethics, these issues have not been criticized by the observers. They [the observers] have not seen in those issues any shortcomings, which are worth of criticism. This is not exactly true. They see the problems but they don't dare to point them out (Imarah 1989:162).

Fourth, Amin looked down on public opinion and its role in achieving reform. "What is public opinion?," Amin asked (Imarah 1989:151), "Is it not, many times, an idiot crowd, an enemy to change, a servant to falsehood, a supporter to injustice? If reformers always wait for the agreement of the public opinion, the world will never change." These views led Amin to focus on writing and to abstain from engaging the masses at the grassroots level.

## *2) Amin's View of Reform*

Amin's life and circumstances led him to view reform as a gradual, evolutionary long-term process that would take generations to happen and that should focus first and foremost on changing the social and cultural circumstances of his contemporary Egyptians, starting with reforming the way Egyptians treated women and raised up their children. Amin understood that authoritarianism was a major hindrance to Muslims' progress, but he favored not to deal with politics and to focus instead on social and cultural reform.

In this regard, Amin believed in some kind of a linear evolutionary theory. He actually quoted Darwin and his evolutionary theory a few times. Amin thought that human history is moving toward progress and that all nations can follow the same path of civilization if they follow science. He believed that all societies rise and decline and fight with each other for power and control and that victory will be granted to the society that is most powerful in science, wealth, and the military. (Imarah 1989:374-375)

In addition, Amin believed that change can only come from inside. "The status of any nation," Amin argued (Imarah 1989:171), "is not a situation that exists or changes because of luck. It is a permanent outcome that does not change unless that nation changes itself." He thought that Muslims were not going to reform their societies unless they clearly saw their shortcomings and weaknesses. "If nations don't feel their retreat compared to other nations and their inability to achieve what other nations have achieved," Amin argued (Imarah 1989:503), "nations will not seek either to advance or to achieve one of the goals [that the more advanced nations have achieved]." Therefore, he

criticized Muslims who talked about the glorious past of the Muslim civilization “every time Europeans speak about their sciences and arts” and urged them to focus instead on their contemporary difficult circumstances and to evaluate their conditions humbly and objectively (Imarah 1989:450).

He also believed that “all Muslim societies” at his time were living in “a state of full decay” (Imarah 1989:232) that started after the fall of the Abbasid Empire (Imarah 1989:485). As a social critic, Amin saw decline and retreat in all aspects of Egyptians’ lives. He criticized Egyptians for being lazy and dependent on their governments in education and in employment. He criticized them for neglecting the importance of education, for disrespecting their families and their fellow citizens, and for neglecting the importance of educating women and children.

Third, Amin believed that Muslims’ decay was rooted in two major problems, lack of education (in its general and holistic sense) and authoritarianism. Regarding education, Amin saw Egyptian society as a society that was full of ignorance, wrong ideas, and bad habits. For example, he criticized Egyptians for mistreating their wives, for preventing their daughters from going to school, and for believing that educating women corrupted their souls and ethics. He also believed that Egyptians did not respect their countries, each other, or their families. He felt that Egyptians misunderstood their religion, neglected science and the scientific way of thinking, and favored many wrong habits and traditions that they inherited from their parents. Therefore, he believed that reform in Egypt should start with spreading knowledge and education and with fighting the many wrong social, religious, and cultural ideas that Egyptians had. He also believed

that reform should start with educating women because women are responsible for educating the future generations.

If Egyptians want to reform their conditions, they have to start reform from its first step. They have to believe that they have no hope in becoming a lively nation that is respected among the advanced nations. ...unless their homes and families are a good environment that can raise men who have the characteristics of success. And there is no hope for transforming the homes and families [of the Egyptians] into this good environment unless women are educated and unless women share, with men, men's ideas, hopes, and pains, if not all of their activities. (Imarah 1989:512)

Although Amin devoted most of his writings to social reform and to defending women's right to education, he believed that the main cause of Muslims' decline was authoritarianism. He thought that government oppression was the source of all oppression in society, and he believed that ending oppression would improve people's ethics and spread a culture of ethics and rights. In this regard, Amin was very critical of the Muslim governments in general and of Mohamed Ali's regime in particular. Amin believed that Mohamed Ali and Ismael were very oppressive rulers who, along with other former rulers of Egypt, taught the Egyptian peasants to fear nothing more than they feared the oppression of the government. This fear, according to Amin, taught Egyptians many wrong social and cultural habits, such as lying, hypocrisy, and to oppress their subordinates.

Yet, Amin did not recommend any specific solutions for authoritarianism. He was a social reformer who believed in gradual change through spreading education and ethics. He also believed that change requires a long period of time and that reform would take generations to occur (190). He also praised his contemporary Egyptian rulers, Tawfiq and

Abbas, for being constitutional rulers, who granted Egyptians many freedoms (Imarah 1989:243).

Fourth, it is important here to note that Amin rejected the idea of blaming Islam for Muslims' decline. Throughout his writings, Amin spoke about the Islamic religion as a perfect religion that provides right guidance to Muslims in all aspects of life. On the other hand, Amin believed that the way his contemporary Muslim masses and religious scholars understood Islam was wrong and problematic. He believed that Muslims had replaced Islam's guidance and rules with distorted views and facts that were based on wrong un-Islamic habits and with traditions that were encouraged by authoritarianism.

### ***3) Amin's Occidental Discourse***

In the two previous sections of this chapter, I have focused on explaining Amin's life and view of reform. I have demonstrated how the political circumstances of Egypt during the 1890s and Amin's aristocratic background, in addition to his attitudes toward the masses and toward politics, led him to see reform from a particular perspective. In this section, I will explain how the previous factors shaped Amin's Occidental discourse and led him to deemphasize the negative perceptions he had about the West for the sake of promoting the West as a model for social and cultural reform.

#### *1. Amin's Occidental Discourse When Talking to Westerners*

Most of Amin's writings were in Arabic and were directed toward Egyptian intellectuals and young, educated generations. However, Amin wrote a French book that is hardly known in Arabic intellectual circles (Imarah 1989:220). Amin wrote this book,

titled *The Egyptians*, in 1894 responding to a French traveler, Duc D'h Arcouri, who wrote a book criticizing Egyptians and Egypt.

In *The Egyptians* Amin criticized the European Orientalists who wrote about Islam, Muslims, and Muslim societies without having enough knowledge or understanding of them and who used, in their books, strange, extreme and random stories about the Orient to make their books more interesting to the general public and more saleable. "I know from my experience the approach that Europeans follow in writing their books [about the Orient]," Amin said (Imarah 1989:224), "They depend on what the translators provide them. And the more horrible and very weird these materials are, the more expensive it will be. We should not forget how these materials guarantee the success of the book." Amin also criticized the Orientalists for not mixing with Easterners and for not making any serious efforts to know the people or the cultures of the Orient.

Amin was particularly critical of the way Orientalists studied the religion of Islam. Amin felt that (Imarah 1989:225) Duc D'h Arcouri "hated" Islam "deep in his heart" and that (281) Duc D'h Arcouri was launching a "campaign" against Islam in his book. He also criticized Duc D'h Arcouri for not studying the Quran or the life of the Prophet Mohamed and for failing to quote either of them when talking about Islam. Duc D'h Arcouri's perceived attack on Islam led Amin to defend Islam's position regarding several issues, such as Islam's position on learning and science, on women's rights, and on slavery. Moreover, Amin launched a counterattack on the history of Europe and on Christianity. For instance, regarding the issue of slavery, Amin responded to Duc D'h Arcouri's criticism by defending Islam as a religion that sought to end slavery. Then he

launched a counterattack on Duc D'h Arcouri by reminding him that some Western nations, including America, approved slavery and that many European poor classes lived during the Middle Ages in a status that was worse than slavery. Amin also attacked Christianity in response to Duc D'h Arcouri's attack on Islam and described it as a religion that is full of contradictions and irrationalities. Amin also attacked the concept of the Trinity as "a vague [concept] that cannot be explained." (Imarah 1989:265)

When it came to the treatment of women, which was one of Amin's favorite intellectual subjects, Amin responded to Duc D'h Arcouri's attack on the status of women in Egyptian society by defending the way Egyptians treated women and by launching a counterattack on the way Western societies treated women. In this regard, Amin defended the separation between men and women in Egyptian society as a practice that protected both men and women from seduction (Imarah 1989:261). In contrast, Amin attacked Western societies for having high rates of divorce, out-of-marriage pregnancies, and abortion (Imarah 1989:252-255). He also attacked several Western social habits, such as drinking and swimming while wearing tiny swimming suits, for being too liberal and seductive.

When it came to ethics, Amin described the average Oriental as a kinder individual, whose soul was less corrupt and who was ethical by nature and not because of his fear of being punished by law (Imarah 1989:274-275). Amin also defended Egyptians, Arabs, and Turks as brave, honest, generous and kind people who were corrupted only because of their authoritarian governments. In contrast, Amin thought that the majority in

the West acted ethically not because of their natural kindness, but out of their fear of being punished by law (Imarah 1989:275).

If someone wants to judge the ethics of a nation, he can only observe the behaviors of its individuals. And I emphasize again that the people of the East in general are less interested in evil, less willing to offend others, and more willing to help others. Even the criminals [among the Eastern people]! Their crimes don't involve the deceiving tricks, the intensity, the diversity, and the precision that the criminals of the West are known for. (Imarah 1989:279)

When it came to the interactions between the East and the West, Amin was very critical of the negative effects many Europeans had on the East. He felt that many Europeans who lived in the East did not care about the interests and welfare of Easterners. Instead, they used all illegal means and tricks to deceive and overcome the poor Egyptian peasants and to manipulate their land and wealth (Imarah 1989:276). At the state level, Amin believed that Europe used its influence and control over Egypt's affairs against the interests of the Egyptian people.

The influence of Europe has been increasing in Egypt since the regime of Said until it reached during Ismail's regime [the level of] real control over us. Since that time, all our actions and movements have become subject to orders coming from the prime ministries of Paris, London, and Berlin. ...Europe has always used this influence against Egypt. (Imarah 1989:300)

Amin was critical of how the European consulates in Egypt had become like "independent kingdoms" inside Egypt that were "fully free" from the influence of the Egyptian state. Amin criticized the European consulates for caring too much about the interest and safety of their own citizens to the extent that they shielded their citizens from Egyptian law even if they violated the law and committed punishable criminal acts (Imarah 1989:301).



However, this criticism did not prevent Amin from expressing some positive views toward the West. For instance, Amin showed appreciations for the minority of Europeans who moved to the East to benefit and help Easterners (Imarah 1989:228). In addition, throughout the book Amin looked at Europe as a role model that Egypt was seeking to mimic (Imarah 1989:232).

What is striking about these views is that they were hardly expressed in Amin's writings to the Egyptian masses, which focused on presenting the West to Muslim as a model for reform that should be imitated.

## *2. Amin's Occidental Discourse When Talking to Egyptians*

Amin's Arabic articles and books, in contrast to his French book, held generally positive views of the West. This is because, as explained in the previous section, Amin viewed reform from an evolutionary perspective that saw the decline and rise of nations as an inevitable, continuous process and thought that all nations would learn from each other one day. This led Amin to believe that his contemporary Egyptians had no other alternative to progress but to look up to Europe, his contemporary most advanced civilization, and learn from it. This conviction led Amin, when talking to Egyptians in Arabic, to deemphasize many of the negative Occidental views that he expressed in his French writings.

When talking to Egyptians, Amin rejected the idea of blaming Europe for Muslims' problems. Amin once described Europe as the "the only major obstacle that we [Egyptians] have been fighting in order to reclaim our status in the world" (Imarah 1989:302); but he believed that Egyptians' interactions with Europeans had been

ultimately positive because those interactions stimulated Egyptians to mimic Europeans and to seek to reach their standard of living.

Egyptians started in these last years to feel their bad social conditions. They started to show signs of pain from such circumstances, and they felt the necessity to work to improve their status. They got the news of the Europeans and they mixed and lived with many Europeans. They got to know how advanced the Europeans are. They saw how the Europeans are enjoying good living, power, influence, and many other advantages that the Egyptians lack. ...Therefore, the Egyptians felt the need to match them [the Europeans], and to enjoy the same advantages. (Imarah 1989:511)

Moreover, Amin believed that Egyptians were the source of their own problems, not the Europeans: "If the Europeans intend to harm us, they don't have to do anything other than to leave us to ourselves. Then the Europeans will not find a means to achieve their goal than our current status (Imarah 1989:512)."

Europe, for Amin, was a role model that Egypt should follow to improve its circumstances. He saw Europe as the most advanced civilization of his time and believed that Muslims should learn from European sciences, values, and social systems. "Egypt is becoming a European nation in an amazing way. Egypt's administration, buildings, monuments, streets, habits, language, ethics, taste, food, and clothes are acquiring a European taste," Amin stated proudly (Imarah 1989:232).

Therefore, Amin had no problem admitting that his contemporary Muslim societies were weaker than the European (Imarah 1989:304). But he believed that Egyptians' weakness and decline were not inherent or endemic characteristics in the Egyptian people. Egyptians' problems, according to Amin, were man-made problems that other societies had faced before. He frequently talked about Europe and how it was less advanced during the Middle Ages and saw that as a proof that all nations can overcome

their temporary decay. These ideas reflect Amin's belief in an evolutionary view of progress, which I explained in the previous section.

According to the same views, Amin believed that Muslims, when they were stronger, "conquered other nations to defend what they have and to expand their kingdom and power, and to benefit their industry and trade." "This is the goal that Europeans try to achieve in the Orient now," Amin thought (Imarah 1989:377). He also saw the endless competition between nations as a universal order ordained by God.

In addition, Amin thought that all nations learn from each other at some historical moment. He believed that early Muslims learned and adopted the advanced sciences and arts of the nations that they conquered (Imarah 1989:494). Then Muslims built on those sciences and arts and developed their own. In the Middle Ages, Amin believed, Europeans learned from Muslims and used Muslims' advanced sciences and arts to build their own civilization. Therefore, he encouraged Muslims to learn from Europe and progress in the same way Europe had progressed. For instance, when it came to the issue of treating women, Amin stated (Imarah 1989:485), "I don't find any reason why we should not follow the same path, in which the European nations have marched ahead of us." And, when it came to educating the new generation, Amin believed (Imarah 1989:499), "we have no solution except to raise our children so they would understand the affairs of the Western civilization and know its foundations and branches and effects."

It is impossible to fix our [difficult] conditions, if we don't establish them according to the new contemporary modern sciences. Human conditions, despite how different they are, and regardless of whether they are materialistic or non-materialistic, are subject to the power of science (Imarah 1989:499).

This is why we see that the advanced nations, despite their different races, languages, nationalities, and religions, are similar to a great extent in the shape of their governments, administrations, courts, family systems, education, languages, literature, buildings, and streets. Moreover, [they are similar] in many basic habits, such as clothes, greeting, and eating. And, when it comes to sciences and industries, there is no difference except that they increase in some nations more than in others (Imarah 1989:499-500).

From this, we can verify that the result of civilization is to push all humanity in the same path. The difference between the primitive nations or the nations that did not reach a high level of civilization [on one side and the civilized nations on the other side] is that these nations [the primitive ones] have not built their social status on a scientific basis (Imarah 1989:500).

This is what made me use the Europeans as a role model and recommend imitating them and what encouraged me to encourage people [Egyptians] to look at the [status of] European woman (Imarah 1989:500).

This view of progress and of the relationship between the East and the West led Amin to spread more positive images of Europe than negatives ones. In this context, Amin repeatedly used two main images of the West. The first image was the image of the Western individual as an active, ambitious individual, who is risk-taking and who was raised up to think of his own self as an independent free person who does not like to depend on his government. Amin also praised Europeans for being good citizens, who love their countries and love to work voluntarily and to establish non-profit organizations that work for the public good. In contrast, Amin criticized Egyptians for being lazy, complaining, dependent on their government, and lacking the ethics of public and group work (Imarah 1989:173-187).

You can see [that] the [Western] man, in America for instance, starts his career with a small business or industry, then reaches after a few years to the level of a big businessman who own millions. Why? Because he works to gain wealth. They are always working. Every one of them works during the day and brainstorms about his work during the night. He [the Western man] was brought up to work hard. He was raised up to be independent. ...His education and habits taught him to be attached to work. ...He observes everything. He experiments with everything. And, when he reaches his goal, he will feel victorious and his success will encourage him to continue. If he fails and faces a hindrance that he

cannot overcome, he will start a different business or he will work in the same business [after] seeking a different approach. (Imarah 1989:173)

In contrast, you will find the individual among us, the Egyptians or the Easterners in general, is like an animal that is tied blindly to a water pump. He [the Easterner] walks slowly, step by step, with his eyes covered. And he may stop after very few steps until he hears a sound alarming him [that he has to work more]. Then he will push himself to walk another step; then he will stop. (Imarah 1989:173)

The second image dealt with the status of women, which was the main focus of most of Amin's Arabic writings. In this regard, Amin praised the West for being more respectful of women and for encouraging women to learn and play sports and advance in education and careers. He felt that women were equal to men in the West and that Western societies had developed better ways for educating and bringing up their children, both mentally and physically. "Westerners speak proudly of the [positive] effect women have on their lives," Amin applauded (Imarah 1989:234).

The new woman, which is one of the fruits of modern civilization, started to appear first in the West due to the new scientific discoveries that freed the human mind from the influence of myths, doubts, and lies, and that made him the master of his own self. (Imarah 1989:420)

In addition to these positive images, Amin encouraged Muslims to learn more about the West and to understand the Western mind and way of thinking, which may be different from Muslims' habits and traditions. He discouraged Egyptians from making generalizations about the West and from judging the West before knowing more about its traditions, history, and languages. Instead, he promoted the idea that Western societies consisted of different classes and groups. For instance, Amin thought (Imarah 1989:504) that Western elites were more corrupt than the middle classes because the former were more "rich and unemployed, and are controlled by their own desires."

We, in reality, don't know about the West except some of the superficial stuff. And many of us do know [about the West] more than what is known [about the West] in the streets, the coffee shops, and what he [that Egyptian] may have read in some stories and fairy tales. (Imarah 1989:504-505)

Whoever wants to judge them [the Westerners] fairly, has to understand all aspects of those [Western] nations' lives and understand all the feelings and emotions that move their souls. This will require a complete understanding of their languages, history, traditions, and ethics. (Imarah 1989:505)

On the other hand, Amin was very critical of the status of women in Muslim societies. He criticized Egyptians for disrespecting women and mistreating them. He criticized the way Egyptians brought up their daughters and how Egyptians prevented their daughters and wives from gaining education, playing sports, and pursuing their own careers.

Woman, in the eyes of Muslims, in general, is not a full human being. And man among them believes that he has control over her and he treats her according to this conviction. There are many proofs of that. (Imarah 1989:438)

It is also important here to note that, Amin, when talking to Egyptianas, used some negative images of the West, but less frequently. When it came to the relationship between the European nations, Amin saw them as blood brothers who hated each other. "The European kingdoms," Amin argued (Imarah 1989:395), "show peace while they are getting ready for war. And when the opportunity comes each of them will jump on the other to destroy him."

Amin was critical of colonialism. He saw European civilization as a greedy civilization that was looking for wealth and profit everywhere and through all means, regardless of whether those means were legitimate or not. He also believed that Europeans were willing to use violence and their power to dominate weaker nations and manipulate their wealth (Imarah 1989:374)

In addition, Amin was critical of the history of Europe and Christianity. He believed that Europe during the Middle Ages was socially and culturally as bad as, and some times worse than, the Muslim societies of his time. He also believed (Imarah 1989:325) that Christianity as a religion was inferior to Islam when it came to family laws and to the rights of women. For example, he thought that Christianity, contrary to Islam, did not provide a clear religious legal system that deals with women's rights. He also criticized (Imarah 1989:398) the church for prohibiting divorce for a long period of time, which made family laws intolerable for some Christians.

In summary, this section shows that Amin, deep in his heart, saw the West both as an obstacle against and a model for reform. Yet, because of Amin's personal agenda and background and his understanding of reform and how it should be achieved, he chose to focus on portraying the West positively when talking to Muslims.

#### ***4) Amin's View of America***

America was clearly present in Amin's writings. He spoke about America several times and saw it as the best and most advanced Western society in terms of the way Americans treat women, bring up their children, and teach their children to be independent and risk-taking individuals.

When it came to the status of women in the West, Amin believed that "the American woman comes first" in terms of freedom and independence. "Then," Amin thought (Imarah 1989:325), "comes the British woman, then the German, then the French, then the Austrian, then the Italian, then the Russian, and after that the rest will follow." "America's women," Amin argued (Imarah 1989:364), "are the earth's freest

women.” He also spoke positively about the freedoms American women have and about how they mix freely and constantly with men without either getting corrupted or losing their honor or ethics. He praised America for granting women their political rights and for having civil groups that worked on defending women rights (Imarah 1989:384). He also praised America for having flexible divorce laws despite the church’s opposition to that notion (Imarah 1989:399).

In addition, Amin spoke positively of the role American women played in America’s public life. He praised America for allowing women to work as priests, judges, public officials, engineers, journalists, and in many other careers. He felt that the participation of women in America’s public life had a positive effect on the rest of society and that it made public life more civil and honest (Imarah 1989:429).

When it came to education, Amin praised the way Americans brought up their children and taught them to be free, independent, and risk-taking individuals. He also praised Americans’ independence from their governments.

Look at the Eastern countries: you will find that women are enslaved to men and that men are enslaved to the rulers. The [Eastern] man is unjust inside his home and [simultaneously] a subject for injustice outside his home. Then look at the European nations, you will find that their governments are built on freedom and on respecting individual rights, which contributed to the rise of women to a high degree of status and freedom in terms of work and thinking. ...Then look at America: you will find that [American] men are fully independent in their private lives and that the authority of the government and its intervention in individuals’ affairs are almost non-existent. This is why the freedom of women [in America] very much increased beyond [the freedom of women] in Europe. Hence, women in America are equal to men in all private rights, and in some states they became equal in some political rights (Imarah 1989:426-427).

Yet Amin also mentioned some negative images of America. This was part of his general critique of Europe and the West more than a critique of America itself. In this



regard, Amin criticized America as one of the Western societies that approved slavery in modern times (Imarah 1989:237). He also criticized the founders of America for the injustices they committed against the native Americans. In this regard, Amin compared early Americans to European colonizers, whom he perceived as selfish, greedy, and uncaring about the interests of poor nations and masses (Imarah 1989:374).

In general Amin, used America as another better example to show his Arab and Muslim audience that they needed to learn from the West. By portraying America as a new and better West, Amin was trying to demonstrate to Egyptians the richness of Western civilization and how it is capable of producing new and more advanced societies.

#### ***5) Role of Islam in Amin's Occidental Discourse***

Religion had a limited place on Amin's Occidental discourse. Amin was very critical of the way his contemporary Muslims understood Islam (Imarah 1989:289). He always felt that the masses' understanding of Islam reflected their inherited cultural customs and traditions more than it reflected the true teachings of Islam itself, especially when it came to the treatment of women (Imarah 1989:380). He rejected the notion that Islamic civilization was perfect. Instead, he believed that Muslim civilization was a human experience that is imperfect. Therefore, he encouraged his contemporary Muslims to learn about Islamic civilization; but he cautioned that (Imarah 1989:496) "many aspects [of Islamic civilization] cannot be part of our contemporary social system." He believed that modern Europe was capable of producing a more advanced civilization and that better social systems could be established in the universe in the future.

In addition, Amin was an advocate for national unity. Therefore, he was proud (Imarah 1989:228) that Egyptian Muslims were united with the Egyptian Copts against the Ottomans rulers (who were Muslims) during the Orabi national uprising of the early 1880s. He also spoke throughout his writings about the Egyptians in an inclusive language that included all Egyptians, and he did not differentiate between Muslim Egyptians and Christian Egyptians. Moreover, he believed that Eastern Christian women were more educated about life than their Muslim counterparts because they were allowed to mix with men and participate in public life more than the Muslim women (Imarah 1989:363).

However, Amin's critiques of religious thinking and nationalistic attitudes did not prevent him from speaking proudly about Islam as a religion. He defended Islam frequently. In addition, he believed that Islam provided better guidance on issues such as women's rights, family laws, social justice, and scientific thinking than Christianity and than many contemporary European laws.

Yet Amin's pro-Islamic attitudes did not lead him to believe that religion was a major reason for the conflict between the West and the Muslim world. Actually, he rejected those who spread religious animosity between the East and the West and called upon his contemporary Muslims to reject religious bias and to look at the West and study it objectively.

The old animosity that lasted for generations between the Easterners and the Westerners because of their different religions has been, and still is, a reason for their ignorance about each other, for doubting and misjudging each other, and for affecting their minds to the extent that they misperceive things. Nothing can push people away from the truth more than being under the influence of desires while looking for the truth. (Imarah 1989:502)

6) *Conclusion: Main characteristics of Qasim Amin's Occidental Discourse*

I conclude this chapter with highlighting some of the key aspects of Qasim Amin's Occidental discourse.

First, the circumstances of Egypt at the end of the 1890s were different, at least as seen by Amin, than what someone like Afghani saw during the 1870s. Amin felt that Egyptian society during the 1890s enjoyed more political rights and freedoms. Unlike Afghani, who was occupied with agitating the masses to resist British colonialism, Amin focused on reforming the social and cultural circumstances of the Egyptian society. He considered colonialism to be a greedy and manipulative phenomenon, but he did not focus on resisting it. He also considered authoritarianism to be the main source of Muslims' decline, but he did not pay much attention to fighting it.

Second, most of Amin's attention focused on social and cultural reform. He thought that educating the masses should help them empower themselves and build an advanced civilization. He also believed that all civilizations learn from each other and that it was Muslims' turn to look up to Europe as a model and mimic it.

Third, Amin was unique in his willingness to challenge the social and cultural views of his contemporary Egyptian masses, which were largely conservative. In this regard, Amin despised the role of the masses in achieving reform, looked down on Egyptian public opinion, and did not consider himself as a grassroots or a public leader. Instead, he focused on intellectual reform.

Third, Amin, deep in his mind, believed that Western civilization had many negative aspects. He believed that some Europeans hated Islam and campaigned against

it, that Western civilization had produced many social and cultural problems, and that Europeans were less kind individuals than Arabs and Muslims. He expressed such views in his French book, yet he chose to deemphasize these views in his Arabic writings.

Fourth, Amin's background, understanding of reform, and his willingness to challenge the conservative beliefs of the masses led him to manipulate the information he had about the West in order to serve his reform agenda by convincing his Arab audience that the West was a model for reform that they should look up to, learn from, and mimic. In this regard, Amin used some distinct discourse tactics.

He used double discourse, one when writing to Egyptians and the other when addressing Europeans. When talking to Egyptians Amin deemphasized the negative information he had about the West.

Amin refused to address some serious challenges to Arab and Muslim reform at his time, such as the tyranny of many of his contemporary Muslim governments, the negative effects of colonialism on his contemporary Arab and Muslim societies, and the fact that the exchange between the East and the West at his time was between unequal parties, which could lead to the cultural hegemony of the West over the East.

Amin used binary opposition to contrast Easterners with Westerners. Some of these binaries portrayed Easterners as lazy, dependent people in contrast with active and independent Westerners. Other binaries saw Westerners as less kind people, who were willing to commit evil acts and hurt others knowingly. In contrast Amin portrayed Easterners as kinder people by nature.

It is also important to note that Amin encouraged his Arab audience to learn more about the West and discouraged them from rushing to judgment and from making broad generalizations about the West and Westerners.

Amin used the information he had about America to reinforce his views about the West. By portraying America as a new and better West, Amin was trying to demonstrate to Egyptians the richness of Western civilization and how it is capable of producing new and more advanced societies. Yet Amin also invoked two negative images of America. He spoke about America as a country that approved slavery for a long period of time. Amin mentioned this idea in his French book. He also criticized, in one of his Arabic books, the founders of America for annihilating the native people of the American continent.

Finally, Amin rejected the idea of using religion as a basis for explaining the relationship between the East and the West. He was critical of Islamic civilization and rejected those who believed that Islamic civilization was perfect or complete. He was also very critical of his contemporary Muslim religious scholars, who he believed misunderstood Islam. On the other hand, when it came to Islam as a religion, Amin spoke about Islam as a perfect religion that was superior to Christianity and to modern Western legal systems.

## Chapter 5

### **The Occidental Discourse of Abdul Al-Rahman Al-Kawakibi**

In this chapter, I will set forth the Occidental views of Abdul Rahman Al-Kawakibi (1854–1902), who is considered to be one of the main founders of Arab nationalism. Kawakibi is also remembered for his writings against authoritarianism and tyranny, which still inspire many pro-democracy advocates in the Arab world today.

Kawakibi's life and writings, as I will explain later in detail, were motivated by his strong anti-Ottoman attitudes. The Ottomans jailed Kawakibi twice and forced him to leave his native country, Syria, for Egypt, where he was protected by Egypt's ruler, Abbas Helmi, who was in disagreement with the Ottomans. In addition, Kawakibi was occupied with reform and how it should be achieved. In this regard, Kawakibi was interested in reforming Muslims' religious and political thinking. He saw reform as a long-term gradual process and did not believe that his contemporary Arab societies were ready to change their circumstances dramatically. He also thought that reformers should avoid severely criticizing the masses and avoid showing disrespect to the masses' habits and traditions in order to win them to their side. These circumstances and views, I argue throughout this chapter, led Kawakibi to pay less attention to criticizing Western colonialism and its negative effects on Arab and Muslim societies, to praise Europe as a model for reform of political and civil society, but to criticize the West at the social and religious levels.

I start this chapter with a brief introduction to Kawakibi's life and main ideas regarding reform. Then, I analyze Kawakibi's view of the West in general and of

America in particular. I will also examine the role of religion in Kawakibi's Occidental views. I end the chapter by summarizing the main characteristics of Kawakibi's Occidental discourse.

### *1) Kawakibi's Life*

Abdul Rahman Al-Kawakibi was born in 1854 to an aristocratic Syrian family. He worked as a judge, published two newspapers, and was a successful businessman. He was also a known political activist, who enjoyed wide public support. When the Ottomans jailed Kawakibi in 1886, because of his critical political views, they were forced to free him after the public spontaneously rose in his support (Imarah 1975:22). Yet, because of Kawakibi's continuous opposition and criticism of the Ottomans, he was jailed a second time, his newspapers were banned, and he lost his business. In 1899 Kawakibi migrated to Egypt after the Ottomans put tremendous political and economic pressures on him. In Egypt, Kawakibi gained a wide reputation and was supported by Egypt's ruler, Abbas Helmi, who was in conflict and disagreement with the Ottoman Empire. In 1902 Kawakibi passed away after he was poisoned.

Kawakibi's life and main writings were shaped by his negative experience with the Ottomans, who forced him to leave his country, Syria, and flee to Egypt. In response, Kawakibi devoted his life and writings to two main ideas, Arab nationalism and freedom, which the Ottomans disliked. The first idea, Arab nationalism, ran contrary to the pan-Islamic notions that the Ottomans spread in the Muslim world in the second half of the nineteenth century, trying to use religion to strengthen their status as the caliphs of the Muslim world against the incursions of European colonialism. Yet the Ottomans, who

were bad colonizers, as Jamal Al-Din Al-Afghani described them, failed to win Arabs to their side. Christian Arab intellectuals were the first to promote Arab nationalism as an alternative to the Ottomans' pan-Islamic notions. In this regard, Kawakibi was remembered to be the first main Muslim intellectual to champion the cause of Arab nationalism.

Kawakibi's Arab nationalistic ideas were highlighted in one of the two main books that he left, titled *Umm Al-Qura* or *The Mother of Cities*. In *Umm Al-Qura*, Kawakibi wrote about an imaginary international conference of Muslim scholars held in Mecca, the mother of cities, to analyze the root causes of Muslims' decline and to look for solutions to those problems. The book was full of useful analytical ideas about the status of Muslim societies at Kawakibi's time and the reasons for their decline. The book ended with a strong appeal for two main initiatives. First, it called for establishing an international non-governmental organization of Muslim scholars that should work on reforming Muslims' ways of thinking and Islamic educational systems. Second, Kawakibi believed that this organization should be based temporarily in Egypt and ultimately in Mecca because Arabs were the founders of the Muslim civilization and were more trustworthy when it came to caring for Islam and Muslims. He also launched a severe attack on the Ottomans, whom he described as traitors, willing to align themselves with non-Muslim European nations against other Muslim nations, such as the Muslim states in Spain and North Africa, in order to achieve their political interests. He ended his book with a clear appeal for replacing the Ottoman Empire with a righteous Arab caliphate.



The second main cause that Kawakibi championed in his writings was the cause of spreading freedom and fighting tyranny in the Arab world. In the second book that Kawakibi wrote, titled *Tabaee Al-Istebdad* or *The Characteristics of Tyranny*, he described eloquently and in detail the various characteristics of tyrannical regimes. He also spoke about how tyrannical rulers inject tyranny and authoritarianism into all aspects of life in their societies. He spoke about the negative effects of tyranny on ethics, economy, freedoms, education, and several other aspects of social life. The clarity and strength of Kawakibi's arguments in *Tabaee Al-Istebdad* made it an inspiring book for pro-freedom and democracy advocates in the Arab world until today. For example, Kawakibi's writings were widely discussed and honored after the fall and capture of the former Iraqi president, Saddam Hussein. At that time, several Arabic intellectuals remembered and praised Kawakibi for his special ability to correctly describe the nature of authoritarian regimes in the Arab world (Jelbi 2003; Dajani 2004).

## *2) Kawakibi's View of Reform*

The main goal of Kawakibi's writings was to analyze the conditions of his contemporary Muslim societies and to prescribe solutions for their problems. In this regard, Kawakibi focused on reforming the political and religious thinking of his contemporary Muslims. His experience led him to feel that reform is hard to bring to Arab and Muslim societies. He believed that Arabs and Muslim didn't have alternatives to their tyrannical rulers. So he thought that change and reform could only happen slowly and by educating the new Arab and Muslim generations. On the other hand, Kawakibi, as a political thinker who enjoyed wide public support, understood the need not to offend the masses. He thought that reformers and political leaders should avoid criticizing the masses too much and should also show all respect to the masses' habits and traditions, even if they were "silly" (Tahan 2003:212).

The captives of tyranny, even the rich among them, are miserable. ...They live with weak intellect, weak feelings, and weak ethics. It is very unjust to blame them for anything but to provide them with mercy and guidance. They are similar, in their circumstances, to insects that live under rocks. It is only proper for the critics to be merciful. (Tahan 2003:172)

In this regard, Kawakibi held pessimistic views about human nature in general. "Human[s]," Kawakibi believed (Tahan 2003:153), "are closer to evil than to goodness." He also saw the masses as more a part of the problem than of the solution and complained about how some segments of the Muslim masses became used to tyranny and to oppression to the extent that they hated change and fought reform and reformers.

We admit that some of us became used to a thousand years of tyranny, oppression, humiliation, and weakness. So humiliation became one of their tempers, which they will feel pain if they give up. This is the reason why the great majority of Egyptians, Indians, and Tunisians, who got, despite their wishes, some security for their souls and wealth and some freedoms in their

ideas and actions, don't feel sorry and don't feel sad for the conditions of Muslims who live in other countries. In contrast, they look angrily at those who oppose their Muslim rulers. And they may consider reformers as heretics. (Tahan 2002:59-60)

In addition to his pessimism about the role of the masses in reform, Kawakibi preferred gradual change and did not support revolutions or other forms of rapid or radical transformation. He saw change as a long-term process. He thought that reformers should focus on educating the intellectual and political elites rather than on mobilizing the masses. When he called for establishing an international non-governmental organization for Muslim scholars, he believed that this organization "should not intervene in the political affairs at all" (Tahan 2002:182). He also thought that "the goal of the association is limited to achieving religious reform and ... that political organization would follow religion" (Tahan 2002:203).

In this context, Kawakibi urged Muslims to look inside their societies and to seek to understand the internal causes for their decline in order to fix them. He believed that the decline of Muslims was the result of three main internal problems that had many roots and manifestations: misunderstanding of the Islamic religion by the Muslim scholars and masses, the political tyranny of Muslim rulers, and the corruption of the ethics of his contemporary Muslim masses (Tahan 2002:154-157).

When it came to misunderstanding Islam, Kawakibi criticized his contemporary Muslim scholars of mimicking the great old Muslim scholars without trying to understand the methodology they used to analyze Islamic rules and to apply them to their lives. This lazy imitation led recent Muslim scholars, according to Kawakibi, to

overburden the Muslims masses with too many Islamic rules that the masses could neither understand nor apply in their daily lives.

When it came to political tyranny, Kawakibi was very critical of Muslim rulers in general and of the Ottomans in particular. He believed that the Muslim regimes had become unrestricted kingdoms, in which the rulers were free from any responsibility or political constraints. He complained about the lack of freedom, security, hope, justice, and equality in Muslim societies. He believed that tyrannical Muslim rulers fought knowledge and knowledgeable people and elevated the status of pseudo-scholars who were loyal to them. He thought that Muslim rulers had manipulated religion, had used Islam to justify their tyranny, and had corrupted the ethics of the Muslim masses.

He believed that the Ottomans were very bad governors, who led a very centralized empire and who intentionally divided Muslims to control them. He believed that the Ottomans deliberately appointed bad rulers, who were inefficient and who were hated by the Muslim countries they ruled, in order to be sure that the local masses would never unite with their appointed rulers against the Ottoman Empire. He also accused the Ottomans of fighting ideas and knowledge and of promoting the worst people, in ethics and in knowledge (Tahan 2002:157-161).

The reason for [Muslims'] retreat is the change that occurred in Islamic politics. They [the Muslim regimes] used to be completely representative (or democratic). Then, they became, after [the death of] the righteous [caliphs] and as a result of internal fighting [over power], kingdoms that are restricted by the main principles of religion. Then they became seemingly non-restricted kingdoms (Tahan 2002:56).

Regarding the ethics of the Muslim masses, Kawakibi was very critical of the ethical and moral status of his contemporary Muslims. He criticized them for being used

to ignorance and for being hopeless. He accused them of being lazy, of becoming disinterested in advising or helping each other, and of being unwilling to stand up and fight for their freedoms and rights.

Tyranny affects many human inclinations and good ethics by weakening them, by corrupting them, and by obliterating them. [Tyranny] makes the individual ungrateful for the bounties of his Lord because he cannot actually own these bounties to really thank the Lord for them. [Tyranny] makes the individual hate his people because they support oppression. [Tyranny makes the individual] lose his love of his home country because he cannot be sure about its stability. This makes him [the individual] wish to leave it [his home country]. [Tyranny] weakens the individual's love of his family because he becomes unsure about how long his relationship with them can last. [Tyranny] weakens the individual's trust in the friendship of his loved ones because he knows that they are like him. ...[They] could be forced to harm their friend or to even kill him while crying. The captive of tyranny does not own anything ... because he does not own any money that is not subject to be stolen [by the tyrant] or any honor that is not subject to be violated [by the tyrant]. (Tahan 2003:133)

In response to these problems, Kawakibi supported the idea of gradual change. “Tyranny,” Kawakibi thought, “cannot be resisted by force, but it can be resisted by soft power and gradualism” (Tahan 2003:210). He believed that Muslim societies were not ready for democratic governance because many of their populations did not feel the need for freedom or the pain of tyranny. He also thought that Muslims should work on finding alternative leaders and political systems that could replace tyranny before trying to resist the tyrannical regimes and abolish them.

To strengthen Muslim civil societies, Kawakibi advocated the idea of building and spreading European-style organizations of civil society. In this regard, he drafted the bylaws of an international organization of Muslim scholars that should work as a Muslim think-tank that focused on reforming Islamic education and on reforming Muslims' way of thinking. He thought that such an organization should be non-governmental and non-

sectarian. He hoped that this organization would eventually finance scholars and scientific research, publish its own newspapers, and build its own schools. He believed that such an organization should stay away from politics and should seek to achieve reform gradually through reforming education and thinking (Tahan 2002:177-192).

Continuous organizations can support their projects for a long period of time, which can be longer than a person's life. They can achieve their activities with strong intentions that are not corrupted with hesitation. ...This is why organizations can achieve great things and can achieve amazing things. This is the secret of the rise of the European nations. (Tahan 2002:48)

### ***3) Kawakibi's Occidental Discourse***

In the previous sections, I have shown how Kawakibi's life and view of reform led him to focus on internal reform through educating the new Muslim generations about politics and religion and trying to build new, strong organizations of civil society. He distrusted the role of the masses in reform and stayed away from politically mobilizing them, yet he was careful not to offend the masses' habits and tradition.

In this section I explain how the previous circumstances and views led Kawakibi to see the West from a particular perspective that was less critical of the effect of Western colonialism on the status of Muslims, looked up to the West as a model for reforming Muslims' political thinking and civil societies, and was more critical of the West at the social and religious levels.

In this regard, it is important to note that Kawakibi did not speak to multiple audiences. All his writings were written in the Arabic language and were directed toward an Arab audience. It is also important to note that Kawakibi's discourse was a little bit too sophisticated for the regular Arab and Muslim masses, which were largely

uneducated at his time. Therefore, one can say that Kawakibi's main audience was the educated Arab and Muslim sections of his society.

### *1. Kawakibi's View of the Effect of Western Colonialism on the Muslim World*

As someone who focused on internal and gradual reform and whose main objective was to reform Muslims' ways of thinking and to spread freedom and democracy in the Arab world, Kawakibi paid less attention to the relationship between the West and the Muslim world and to the effect this relationship had on the status of Muslim countries and focused more on the internal causes of Muslims' decline. This fact does not mean that the West was not present in Kawakibi's writings. Actually, the West was very present throughout the majority of Kawakibi's writings. But the West as a factor affecting Muslims' life and circumstances always came second in Kawakibi's writings to the internal conditions of the Muslim societies themselves. In other words, because Kawakibi's main audience was Arabs and because his main focus was internal gradual reform, he always gave priority to analyzing the internal factors affecting Muslim societies, especially the role of tyrannical Muslim regimes and the counterproductive influence of the Muslim masses, which were largely ignorant and passive.

In fact, Kawakibi accused Muslim governments of misrepresenting Islam to the West. He believed that Muslim rulers intentionally portrayed Islam to the West as a religion that is not compatible with democracy or with modern political systems in order to use this distorted image of Islam as a justification for their lack of democratization (Tahan 2002:74). He also thought that Western governments were, from the standpoint of Islam, more qualified to govern Muslims than his contemporary Muslim regimes and

even believed that Western colonial countries did a better job of understanding and representing the cultures and aspirations of their colonized Muslim people than the Ottomans did in the Arab world (Tahan 2002:162). Therefore, Kawakibi emphasized the importance of “describing the wisdom and tolerance of Islam to the civilized world” (Tahan 2002:117). He believed that Europeans would be easily attracted to Islam because of its rationality. He also called on the West to help the East improve its conditions and reminded the West that Islam had contributed to its progress and civilization (Tahan 2003:189).

In addition, Kawakibi’s socially and religiously conservative agenda led him to be critical of Muslim elites, who mimicked the West at the social and cultural level. Kawakibi considered the Muslim elites to be the most corrupted segments of the Muslim societies. He described them as children in the way they looked up to the West and sought to imitate it. This imitation, according to Kawakibi (Tahan 2002:170,171), led the elites to shy away from defending religion, to look down on their national traditions, and to shy away from wearing their traditional clothing and from defending their own people.

He was also critical of what he called “the Westernized youth.” According to Kawakibi (Tahan 2002:172), the Westernized youth were incapable of keeping from imitating the West “as if they were born followers [of the West].” They also liked Western ideas, such as nationalism. But because they didn’t respect their own traditions, they could only claim to be nationalistic. In reality, Kawakibi thought, Westernized youth didn’t serve or benefit their countries in any way.



On the negative side, Kawakibi believed that Western colonialism only cared about the welfare of Western people and was interested in keeping colonized people weak and dependent on the West. He also believed that colonialism, using British colonialism as an example, tended to encourage the religious differences that existed among the colonized people in order to divide and conquer them (Tahan 2003:63-64). Therefore, he called on his contemporary Muslims not to trust Western colonialism. He even called on the Jews and Christians who lived in the East to consider themselves Easterners and not to trust the West:

The Westerner knows how to lead, how to enjoy, how to enslave, and how to own. When he sees you [Easterners] ready to match him [in power] or to be ahead of him, he will pressure your minds to keep you way behind. ...The Westerner, regardless of how long he stays in the East, in not more than a trader seeking pleasure. He will take the plants of the East and plant them in his country, which he is proud of.

The Dutch people spent in India and its islands, and the Russians spent in the Caspian, as long as we [Muslims] spent in Andalusia. Yet they did not serve science and civilization with one tenth of what had been done for them [in Andalusia]. The French entered Algeria seventy years ago and they did not allow its people [to publish] a single readable newspaper. We see the British, in our country, prefer the food of his country and the fish of his seas over the best meat and fish that we have. And if this is the case, cannot you listeners [Easterners] understand? (Tahan 2003:187)

## 2. *Kawakibi's View of the West as a Model at the Intellectual, Political, and Civil Levels*

When speaking about the West itself, Kawakibi was more positive than negative. On the positive side, Kawakibi appreciated the political life of the West. He praised European and American political scholars for expanding and improving political knowledge. "The people of Europe and America," Kawakibi commended, "have expanded these [political] sciences, and written a lot about them, and in detail. Some of them have even written big volumes about small branches of it [political science]. They

organized its branches into public policy, foreign policy, public administration, political economy, and political rights ... etc.” (Tahan 2003:46). He praised some European thinkers, such as Montesquieu and Voltaire, for reforming the thinking of their people and for standing up to political authority. He also praised some European rulers, such as Napoleon Bonaparte, as great leaders who achieved great things because of their “truthful intentions” and because of their representation and nearness to the ideas, hopes, and traditions of their people (Tahan 2002:162). He even went as far as to suggest that Western rulers were more qualified, from the standpoint of Islam, to govern Muslims than his contemporary Muslim monarchs, who were in his opinion corrupt and unjust.

Religion and logic rule that the kings of the foreigners [Europeans] are more qualified than they [contemporary Muslim rulers] and more deserving to rule Muslims. This is because they [the Western rulers] are nearer to justice and to achieving the public good. They are more qualified to build [our] country and to help people. This is why Allah has stripped many of them [the contemporary Muslim rulers] of their kingdoms. (Tahan 2002:62)

In addition, Kawakibi praised socialism several times. He saw it as a better way to distribute wealth between members of society. He commended how some socialist Westerners lived in communist groups, where wealth was divided equally among all members and where all members had the same rights and standards of life. Kawakibi also believed that socialism was closer to Islam because of its emphasis on equality (Tahan 2002:80).

The politicians who have socialist and moral principles believe that the negative effect of private wealth on the general public of nations is more than the positive effect. This is because [private wealth] empowers domestic tyranny by dividing people into two categories: slaves and masters. And it [private wealth] empowers foreign tyranny and makes it easier for rich nations to violate the freedom and independence of weaker nations. (Tahan 2003:124)

At the level of civil society, Kawakibi commended the West for having strong organizations of civil society, which he attempted to spread in the Muslim world and considered to be the secret behind the progress of the Western nations (Tahan 2002:48). He felt that Western societies had a more organized social life that helped connect Western individuals with each other and that helped increase Westerners' feelings of social integration and their desire to relate to and work with each other. In this regard, Kawakibi praised the West for having unified holidays and weekends, when people could get together and hold meetings, discussions, and conferences. He commended the West for having organized public places and clubs, where people could easily meet to socialize or even to demonstrate. He also praised the West for having theaters, parks, monuments, daily newspapers, and national songs and memorials. He saw all of these features as positive means that could help the people of each nation relate to and work with each other (Tahan 2002:82-83).

At the intellectual level, Kawakibi saw Westerners as rational people, who didn't follow ideas before understanding them. He also gave the impression that the West could help reform the Muslim world through Western Muslims, who understood Islam in a new, enlightened way that combined the positive aspects of both Islam and Western rationality.

He believed that Western sciences proved many of the scientific notions that exist in the Quran and that Muslims could not understand before because of their weak understanding of the natural sciences (Tahan 2002:77, Tahan 2003:80). He considered Protestantism to be a more rational religion than Catholicism, which overemphasizes the

role of the church and priesthood. He believed that Protestants and atheists were more sympathetic to Islam and Muslims and were more ready to convert to Islam because of their rejection of some of the irrational notions of Catholicism.

Our hope is to guide [to Islam] two groups; the first is from the Protestants and the second is from the atheists. We have hope in the Protestants because they have recently left Catholicism because they rather focus on the Bible and the texts of the holy books. [They also] reject the explanations, interpretations, and additions that have no clear source in the Bible. The Protestants in Europe and America are more than one hundred million and they are all religious by nature. They are not stubborn in their beliefs. They are willing to search for and follow the truth if it can be shown to them in a clear rational way.

The second group is the atheists who totally left Christianity because of its incompatibility with reason. They are, in Europe and in America, more than one hundred million. The majority of them are ready to accept a religion that is rational, free, and tolerant and that can relieve them from the hardship of disbelief in current life and from punishment in the hereafter. What is strange, if you look carefully, [is that] the more the people of this group stay away from Christianity. ... they get, of course, closer to the ones of God [Islam] and of the Islamic religion. (Tahan 2002:116-117)

He also spoke proudly and positively about Western Muslims, Westerners who converted to Islam. He portrayed Western Muslims as educated people who lived in countries like Russia and Britain, and who liked Islam because of its rationality. Kawakibi believed that Western Muslims believed in a pure version of Islam, which he considered to be the solution to Muslims' problems. This pure version focused on Islam's main texts, especially the Quran and the traditions of the Prophet Mohamed, and rejected overburdening Muslims with too many and sometimes contradictory schools of Islamic thought that dominated the lives of contemporary Muslims and overburdened them with too many religious rulings, which they could not understand or follow. Kawakibi hoped that Western Muslims could spread Islam in the West, especially among Protestants and atheists, and could reform Islam and the Muslim world.

I see that the coming century will not pass before the numbers of the Occidentalists [Westerners] who believe in Islam increase and before they become more rooted in Islam. They will take the task of freeing the Islamic law [from the wrong beliefs that dominate the thinking of contemporary Muslims] and then spread it among all humanity. ...And a day will come when the Prince Mohamed, the Russian or the British, for instance, will stand as the Imam and he will return the glory of Islam in the most complete system (Tahan 2002:143).

### *3. Kawakibi's View of the West at the Religious and Social Levels.*

At the religious level, Kawakibi briefly praised Christians and Jews as people of pure intentions and natures who don't deny the existence of God and who know God because of their pure and clean innate nature (Tahan 2002:93).

On the negative side, Kawakibi was repeatedly critical of Christianity and of Judaism, and he occasionally used some Quraniq verses to prove his criticism of the two religions. For example, Kawakibi quoted the Quraniq verse that says: "they [Jews and Christians] took their rabbis and their monks to be their lords besides Allah" (Quran: 9:30) to prove the idea that Christians and Jews had corrupted their religions by adding to it too many extra ideas and practices. In contrast, he praised Protestantism and saw it as a response to and a solution for the problems of Catholicism.

He also believed that religion had no effect on the life of European nations (Tahan 2003:187). "If religion has an effect on the Westerner," Kawakibi stated, "animosity would not have existed between the Latins and the Saxons, between the Italians and the French, and between the Germans and the French" (Tahan 2003:187).

At the social level, Kawakibi described Westerners as people who "don't care about anything but to expand in materialism and in desires" (Tahan 2002:169). He criticized the high status that women had in Western civilization. He suggested that European civilization should be called "a female civilization" because "[Western] men

have become like cattle [owned by] their women” (Tahan 2003:116). In this regard, it is important to note that Kawakibi held some negative attitudes toward women, whom he considered to be less ethically capable than men (Tahan 2002:169).

When it came to social justice, Kawakibi accused Europe of being unjust in distributing wealth among its citizens, which created a very poor European class. “Many people in civilized Europe, especially in London and Paris,” Kawakibi said, “don’t have a space where they can sleep while stretching [their bodies]. They sleep in the lower levels of buildings, where cows would not sleep” (Tahan 2003:122).

In addition to these negative images, Kawakibi wrote some of his most anti-Western views in a long comparison that he wrote between the Western individual and the Easterner. In this regard, Kawakibi created a sharp duality in which the Westerner was described as a materialistic, stubborn, free, realistic, and less religious individual. In contrast, the Easterner was described as a kinder, soft-hearted, less free, and more idealistic individual. Although some of the images that Kawakibi used to describe the Western individual were not negative, the bi-polar categorization system that he used to compare Easterners and Westerners put the two groups in sharp opposition to each other.

The Westerner: [is] materialistic in his life, with strong will, tough in his dealings [with people], persistent in taking revenge, as if he does not have any of the high values and honorable emotions that Eastern Christianity has transferred to him. The German man for example [is] dry in his character. He sees that weak humans deserve death and sees every virtue in power and sees every power in money. Therefore, he loves knowledge, but for the sake of money. And he loves glory, but for the sake of money.

However, the people of the Orient are idealistic; they are more subject to the weakness of the heart, to the power of love, to the voices of their emotions, to a tendency to mercy even if it is in the wrong place, to using kindness even with the enemy. They see honor in power and in helping the needy. [They see] wealth in satisfaction and virtue.

The Easterner should not walk with the Westerner in the same path. His [the Easterner's] character is not going to let him enjoy what the Westerner enjoys. If he [the Easterner] tries to imitate the Westerner, the Easterner is not going to do a good job.

There are so many differences between Easterners and Westerners. ...For example, Westerners take an oath from the ruler that he will be truthful in his service and that he will obey the law, while the Eastern sultan takes an oath from his people that they will follow and obey. Westerners give their rulers what they don't need from their wealth, while the princes of the Easterners give whoever they want what is supposed to be the people's money as if it is a charity. The Westerner considers himself an owner of a part of his country, while the Easterner considers himself and his siblings and what he owns [as property] as owned by his prince. The Westerner has rights on his prince and he has no obligations to him, while the Easterner has obligations to his prince but has no rights. Westerners put laws for their prince to follow, while Easterners follow the laws of their prince's desires. Westerners get their destiny from God, while Easterners get their destiny from what the lips of the masters say. The Easterner believes everything quickly, while the Westerner does not believe or negate anything before seeking proof. The Westerner cares the most about his freedom and independence, while the Easterner cares most about religion and about showing off about his religion. The Westerner cares about power, honor, and about more of them. In conclusion: the Easterner is the son of the past and of the imagination, while the Westerner is the son of the future and of seriousness. (Tahan 2003:146,148)

The previous paragraphs show how Kawakibi's life and view of reform led him to view the West ambivalently and selectively both as a threat to and a model for Muslims' reform. Kawakibi's interest in internal reform and his concern with the authoritarianism of the Ottomans led him to pay little attention to the negative effects of Western colonialism on the Muslim world. At the same time, Kawakibi looked up to the West as a model for reform at the political, intellectual, and societal levels. However, Kawakibi's socially conservative agenda led him to criticize the West at the religious and social levels while neglecting the interdependence between the various aspects of Western civilizations. In other words, Kawakibi's agenda led him to praise some aspects of Western civilization selectively and simultaneously to criticize others, without explaining

the relationships and interconnectedness of these various aspects that belong to the same civilization.

#### ***4) Kawakibi's View of America***

Throughout his writings, Kawakibi spoke positively about America, using four main images.

First, he spoke about America as a source of hope for the Muslim world because America empowered itself and gained independence after it was weak and colonized (Tahan 2002:47).

Second, Kawakibi (Tahan 2003:55-56) spoke about Americans as a nationalistic people, who knew how to strike a balance between their love of their country and their personal freedom and independence. In this regard, Kawakibi described Americans' attachment to their country as a feeling of participation in a voluntary association. In contrast, he believed that Muslims were too attached to their countries and less free. He also believed that America was the only country at his time where freedom "has reached its utmost" (Tahan 2002:100). In addition, he spoke positively about America as an example of a united country that had used science and knowledge to build strong national unity despite its religious and administrative diversity.

Science has guided America in several ways and strong principles to build its national unity without religious unity, its racial harmony without ideological [harmony], its political unity without administrative [unity]. (Tahan 2003:186)

At the religious level, Kawakibi praised America's Protestants and atheists, as he believed that they were more rational and more willing to understand and accept Islam if



they were presented with a clear explanation of Islam that showed Islam's rationality and truthfulness (Tahan 2002:116-117, t, 65).

##### ***5) The Role of Islam in Kawakibi's Occidental Discourse***

Kawakibi did not believe in the existence of a religious war between the Muslim world and the West. He believed that some Christian religious groups, naming the Vatican (Tahan 2002:212), didn't like Muslims to unite or to become powerful. However, he made clear that those who believed in such ideas were the minority in the West and that the majority of the "politicians in Britain, Russia, and France" didn't think that way. He thought that the majority in the West saw Muslims and Arabs positively. He also believed that Muslims had not launched any religious wars against Europe since the Eleventh Century, arguing that the Turkish wars on Europe were not religious wars. He believed that the Turks did not launch their wars because of religion even if they had used religion as a justification or as a means to mobilize their Muslim followers (Tahan 2002:213).

In addition, Kawakibi accused Muslim governments of using a dual discourse on Islam, one for Europe and one for Muslims. He believed that Muslim rulers used religion as a means to mobilize and manipulate Muslims domestically. At the same time, Muslim regimes portrayed Islam negatively to the West and used this portrayal to justify their inability to democratize or to develop their countries. In the meantime, Kawakibi praised Western sciences and saw Westerners as rational people who were willing to accept Islam if they were presented with a rational and pure version of Islam. Thus, Kawakibi

encouraged his contemporary Muslims to reform their understanding of Islam and to present the West with this reformed version.

On the other side, Kawakibi spoke about Christianity and Judaism negatively several times, in a way that can sound offensive to many Westerners. For example, he accused Jews of corrupting their religion, and he described Christianity as a religion that is based on a silly and irrational myth, the concept of the Trinity. He believed that the concept of the Trinity had led the “civilized world” to consider “belonging to” Christianity “as [something] dishonorable” (Tahan 2003:173,174).

#### ***6) Conclusion: Main Characteristics of Kawakibi's Occidental Discourse***

In these concluding remarks, I would like to highlight some of the key characteristics of Kawakibi's Occidental discourse.

First, Kawakibi's negative experience with the Ottomans led him to focus on resisting them more than on resisting colonialism and to focus on calling for internal reform more than on calling for independence from Western hegemony.

Second, Kawakibi devoted his life and writings to reforming Muslims' circumstances. In this regard, Kawakibi was pessimistic about the possibility of achieving quick reform. He saw reform as a long-term, gradual process that should start internally by educating the new generations and by building strong organizations of civil society. Kawakibi did not trust the masses and was not interested in mobilizing them to achieve quick change or reform. Yet he himself was socially conservative and he thought that reformers should not be very critical of the masses and should respect the masses' habits and traditions even if they were outdated and useless.

Third, the role of the West, both as a threat to or as a model for reform in the Muslim world, always came second in Kawakibi's thinking to the role of Muslims and their governments.

Fourth, Kawakibi's experience and reform agenda led him to view the West ambivalently and selectively both as a threat to and a model for Muslim reform. He saw the West as a model at the intellectual, political, and social levels. In contrast, he was critical of the West at the social and religious levels. In doing so, Kawakibi used some distinct discourse tactics.

For example, Kawakibi neglected the relationship between the social and religious values of the West and its political and intellectual ideas and social organizations. He selectively chose to praise Western politics and intellectual life while criticizing Western social and religious values, without explaining the interconnectedness between the various aspects of Western civilization.

In addition, Kawakibi was clearly selective in the way he looked at certain aspects of Western civilization. For instance, he praised Western sciences for proving the truthfulness of some Quraniq verses that deal with nature. Yet he overlooked the fact that some of the Western sciences were based on secular and sometimes atheistic premises. In a similar example, Kawakibi defended religion in general, but he spoke positively about Western atheists and believed that they could be easily attracted to Islam, without explaining the reasons behind his belief and without talking about or criticizing some of the anti-religious attitudes that atheists might have.

Moreover, Kawakibi exaggerated the ability of Islam to spread in the West and the ability of Western Muslims to gain power and reform Islam and the Muslim world quickly.

It is also important to point out that Kawakibi's comparison between Western and Eastern individuals was very polarizing. Kawakibi saw the Westerner as a selfish, materialistic individual, who only cares about the interests of his own people. In contrast, Kawakibi portrayed the Eastern individual as a more idealistic, emotional person, who cares about the goodness of others.

Fifth, Kawakibi looked up to America as a country that gained independence and strength after it was weak and colonized. In this way he associated America with the Muslim world. He also looked at America as the place where Western ideals, such as freedom and the independence of the individual, reached their utmost. In addition, Kawakibi liked America at the religious level because he thought that America had many Protestants and atheists. Kawakibi thought that Protestants and atheists were more rational and moderate people, who were more ready and prepared to accept Islam if they were presented with a pure and rational version of Islam.

Finally, Kawakibi did not think that Europe's policies toward Muslims were based on religion. He thought that Western policies were based on materialistic and political reasons. He encouraged Muslims to engage in religious dialogue with Westerners and to present them with a new, pure and rational version of Islam. He also saw the spread of Islam in the West as a source of hope for Muslims, as he hoped that

Western Muslims could one day gain enough knowledge and power to reform the Muslim world.

Yet Kawakibi's contrast between Islam on one hand and Christianity and Judaism on the other hand was concerning. This is because Kawakibi repeatedly accused Catholics and Jews of corrupting their religions. He also used some Quraniq verses to justify his opinion. In this regard it is true that Kawakibi was mainly critical of Catholicism and he was supportive of Protestantism, but this does not negate the fact that some of his ideas about Catholics and Jews were negative, especially that he used Quraniq verses to justify his critical views of Catholics and Jews without putting those Quraniq verses in the context in which they were revealed, which referred to specific groups and incidents. In addition, one can argue that Kawakibi was not supportive of Protestantism in itself, but supported it because it was closer to his ideal understanding of Islam. In other words, it can be argued that Kawakibi supported Protestantism only because he thought that Protestantism brought Christians closer to Islam. In conclusion, Kawakibi's views of Christianity and Judaism are concerning because they could be used as a foundation for anti-Western religious views.

## **Conclusions and Policy Implications**

### **Occidentalism in Late Nineteenth Century Egypt**

In this concluding chapter, I would like to highlight some of the main characteristics of the Occidental discourses used by Jamal Al-Din Al-Afghani, Qasim Amin, and Abd Al-Rahman Al-Kawakibi to shape Arabs' views of America and the West at the end of the nineteenth century in Egypt. These characteristics, if taken as a whole, should constitute a valuable and comprehensive framework for understanding the historical roots of Arab Occidentalism and for helping researchers and policy makers understand and address Arab Occidentalism today.

*First*, the Occidental views of the three writers show that modern Arab Occidentalism can be best understood as part of an overarching discourse on Arab reform and awakening. Such discourse, the study shows, has dominated Arabs' thinking since the beginning of the nineteenth century, when Arabs and Muslims confronted the weakness of their civilization in comparison to the West.

In response, Muslim governments, and the Egyptian regimes in particular, launched several attempts to reform their societies. In Egypt these reform attempts started as early as 1805, when Mohamed Ali took over Egypt. Though Mohamed Ali was successful in transforming Egypt into a regional military and economic power in a short period of time, Egypt's search for reform began to fail after the 1840s, when several European countries united with the Ottoman Empire to put an end to the rise of Egypt's power. Egypt's search for reform also failed because it could not open up its political system, which was generally oppressive and authoritarian. It also failed in improving the

circumstances of the great majority of the Egyptian masses, who remained largely poor, ignorant, and politically weak as political and economic power were concentrated in the hands of a small Turkish ruling elite. Despite Mohamed Ali's defeat and despite the shortcomings of Egypt's successive governments, Egypt remained a major intellectual center in the Arab world, to which major Arab and Muslim intellectuals immigrated to live and spread their ideas.

In this context Afghani, Kawakibi, and Qasim Amin, despite their wide ideological differences, devoted most of their writings to counseling their fellow Muslim and Arab readers on how to reform their thinking and circumstances.

*Second*, The Arab Occidentalism of the three writers was not a neutral reflection of the reality or even of the information each intellectual had about the West. Instead, these Arab and Muslim intellectuals tended to manipulate the information they had about the West in order to serve higher goals, namely, their reform agendas. The study highlighted some common manipulative techniques used by the three writers.

The first of these techniques was double discourse, which was used by Afghani and Qasim Amin, who used one discourse when addressing Westerners and another one when addressing their Muslim audience. Afghani's Occidental discourse when addressing Europeans was more positive about the West than when addressing Egyptians. In contrast, Amin's Occidental discourse when addressing Europeans was more negative than when addressing Egyptians. Both Afghani and Amin, when addressing Egyptians, emphasized certain information they had about the West that could serve their agendas and downplayed other images that could hurt their goals.

The second manipulative technique was selectivity, which was repeatedly used by Kawakibi, who praised some aspects of Western civilization and criticized others without explaining the relationship and interconnectivity among aspects that belonged to the same civilization. For instance, Kawakibi praised Western political thinking while criticizing Western foreign policies, without showing the relationship between those ideas and the policies they might have produced.

Qasim Amin also chose to neglect certain issues that heavily hindered the progress of the Muslim world but did not fit his interests. For instance, He considered authoritarianism to be the main source of Muslims' problems, but he chose not to address it. Similarly, Amin encouraged Muslims to mimic Europe's cultural and social habits, but he did not pay attention to the fact that Muslims were weaker than Europeans, which led to the cultural hegemony of Europe over Egypt and the Arab world.

The third manipulative technique was exaggeration. Afghani exaggerated the weakness of British soldiers and the willingness of Egyptians to revolt against them in order to encourage Muslims to revolt against the British. Because these images were exaggerated, Afghani's predictions and hopes fell short and he always felt disappointed.

Kawakibi exaggerated the ability of Islam to spread in the West and the ability of Western Muslims to gain power and reform the East. He thought that Westerners, especially Protestants and atheists, would be more willing to convert to Islam, and he hoped that Western Muslims would be able in a century to gain enough power to reform and empower the Muslim world. Kawakibi built these predictions on his personal



observations, which he did not support with any scientific facts. Both images appear today to have been exaggerated.

In addition to the previous manipulative techniques, the three writers used binary opposition systems to describe the relationship between the East and the West. The most common and most negative of these binaries dealt with the image of the Western individual versus the image of the Eastern individual. The Western individual was portrayed as materialistic, selfish, tough, realistic, rational, free, independent, stubborn, arrogant, greedy, deceptive, unwilling to admit his mistakes, controlled and motivated by his desires and ambitious. The Westerner was also described as one who is not ethical by nature, but as someone who does not transgress because of his fear of the law.

In contrast, Easterners were described as kinder, emotional, irrational, sensitive, caring about others, shy, dependent, humble, direct and simple, generous, and brave by nature, yet unwilling to defend their rights or their opinions even if they felt that they were right.

Qasim Amin was the only writer among the three who encouraged his readers to learn more about the West and discouraged them from rushing to judgment and from making broad generalizations about the West and Westerners.

*Third*, the writers viewed the West in an ambivalent way. In other words, none of the three writers saw the West in a totally negative or in an entirely positive way. They all saw the West simultaneously as an obstacle against and a model for reform. They appreciated some aspects of Western civilization and criticized others.

*Fourth*, four main factors determined the way each intellectual viewed and spoke about reform and the West.

The first factor was the relationship between the European and the Muslim countries. The three writers saw Western colonialism as a threat to the reform and awakening of the Muslim world. Therefore, they all viewed Western foreign policies negatively.

The second factor was the willingness of each writer to align himself with contemporary Muslim regimes. Here, the study shows that writers such as Afghani, who called upon the Muslim masses to unite with their Muslim governments to reform their circumstances and to resist Western pressures, promoted more anti-Western views than intellectuals who were less interested in politics such as Qasim Amin, or who refused to work with the tyrannical Muslim governments, like Kawakibi. This is because authoritarian regimes fight internal critics and divert intellectuals' attention to criticizing the West.

The third factor was the attitudes of each intellectual toward the conservative agenda of the Muslim masses. Intellectuals who challenged the socially and culturally conservative agenda of the Muslim masses, such as Qasim Amin, had more liberty to praise the West at the social and cultural levels. On the other hand, writers such as Kawakibi and Afghani, who felt that challenging the conservative agenda of the Muslim masses hurt reform, spoke more negatively about the West at the social and cultural levels.

The fourth factor was the way each writer saw the process of reform itself. Here the study shows that writers such as Qasim Amin and Kawakibi, who saw reform as a gradual, educational, and evolutionary process, were more likely to hold pro-Western views. On the other hand, Afghani, who promoted a political and revolutionary view of reform, resorted to more negative views of the West because of his inclination to agitate Muslims to revolt against British colonialism.

*Fifth*, the study identified that the forms of Occidental discourse employed by the three writers differed considerably and responded to their unique circumstances and interests.

The first discourse, used by Jamal Al-Din Al-Afghani, developed during a period, the 1870s, that witnessed increasing European pressures on Egypt. In response, Afghani saw himself as an intellectual and political reformer and wanted to use his intellectual and political skills to mobilize the Muslim masses and governments to revolt against the British incursions in the Arab and Muslim worlds. This goal led Afghani to focus on portraying the West as a threat to the Muslim world and to deemphasize any positive information he had about the West.

The second discourse, used by Qasim Amin, developed during a period, the 1890s, during which Egypt enjoyed relatively more political freedoms. In addition, Amin himself was not interested in politics or in mobilizing the masses. He saw himself as an intellectual interested in educating the young and future Egyptian generations. Amin also believed that reform should start from inside the Muslim family itself. He focused on criticizing the social and cultural traditions of Egyptian society and was willing to

challenge some of the most powerful social taboos of his time, especially regarding the role of women in society. These convictions led Amin to look up to Europe as a model for social and cultural reform and to downplay any critiques he had about Western colonialism.

The third discourse, used by Abd Al-Rahman Al-Kawakibi, was highly influenced by Kawakibi's strong negative attitudes against the Ottoman Empire. Kawakibi was also pessimistic about the Muslim masses and their ability to change their own circumstances. In response, Kawakibi saw reform as a long-term, gradual process that should start internally. He disliked the idea of mobilizing the masses to achieve quick transformations. Yet Kawakibi himself was socially conservative and he thought that reformers should not blame the masses and should show respect to the masses' habits and traditions. These beliefs led Kawakibi to introduce the West as a model for political and intellectual reform that should be mimicked. At the same time, Kawakibi mocked the West at the social and religious levels.

*Sixth*, America was less present in the writings of the three writers compared with Europe as an entity and with major European nations, such as France and Britain, which had a history of intervention in the Muslim world.

America was more present in the writings of Qasim Amin and Kawakibi than in the writings of Afghani, who belonged to a generation that was slightly older than the generation of the other two thinkers. This may mean that Egyptians in particular and Arabs in general started to learn more about the United States in the last quarter of the nineteenth century.

In general, the three writers looked at America as a new and better West for two main reasons. First, America was seen as a country that was occupied by Europeans and that revolted and fought hard to gain its independence from unjust European colonialism. This image was clearly expressed in the writings of Afghani and Kawakbi. In this respect, America was clearly associated with the Arab and Muslim people and was introduced as a model in resisting colonialism that should be imitated. Second, America was seen as the place where Western values, such as freedom, independence, love of work, education, good treatment of women and children, religious tolerance, diversity, national unity, and democracy, reached their utmost expression.

On the other side, Amin, who was the only Western-educated thinker among the three, provoked two negative images of America. First, Amin saw America as a colonial country that was built on the ruins of its native people. Second, Amin criticized America as one of the few modern countries that approved slavery.

I would also argue that the three writers saw America in ways that served their own agendas. Afghani, who wanted to encourage Muslims to revolt against the British, emphasized America as a county that was colonized and unjustly treated by the British. However, Amin, who wanted to encourage Muslims to mimic the West socially and culturally, described America as the place where Western values reached their utmost. In other words, the three writers looked at America selectively to serve their agenda. This led them to use America sometimes as an argument against the West and other times as an argument for the glory of Western civilization.

*Seventh*, religion in general and Islam in particular were clearly present in the writings of the three thinkers. In this regard, none of the three writers believed in the presence of a religious war between the Muslim world and the West. The three writers believed that Western policies toward the Muslim world were mainly based on economic and political interests. They did not think that Western governments were motivated by religion, nor did they think that Muslim governments were motivated by Islam. They hoped for more opportunities to dialogue with Westerners and to explain to them the true nature of Islam. Even Afghani, who used religion to motivate Muslims against the British, was willing to dialogue with Westerners and used a more open discourse when addressing them. Kawakibi thought that Muslim governments constituted a serious obstacle that hindered Muslim scholars' efforts to dialogue with Westerners.

The previous positive views, if promoted today, should provide a powerful alternative against those who promote a religious war between Islam and the West.

On the other hand, religion played a negative role in shaping the Occidental views of the three writers for the following reasons:

First, Afghani used religion as a means to motivate Muslims against British colonialism, although he strongly believed that Western policies were not motivated by religion. He described the British colonizers as people who had deep animosity toward Islam and Muslims and who tended to discriminate against Muslims on religious bases. Therefore, he urged Muslims to revolt against the British to defend their religion and their targeted and discriminated Muslim brothers. Though Afghani knew that religion

was not the main basis for the conflict between the West and the Muslim world, he still used religion to motivate Muslims against the British occupation.

Second, the three thinkers looked at Islam as a perfect religion that is superior to Christianity and Judaism and to modern Western legal systems. One can argue that they were only expressing their religious beliefs in Islam and that they did not intend to offend non-Muslims. On the other hand, this does not deny the fact that the three thinkers held negative views of Christianity and Judaism, and their views could be used by their audience as a basis for anti-Western religious attitudes.

### **Policy Implications**

I have mentioned in my introduction that this thesis pays special attention to the policy implications of its findings. In this regard, I make the following policy-oriented recommendations. First, I would urge policy makers to learn more about Arab Occidentalism, its roots, and the main factors shaping it. Based on this study and on the framework presented in the previous paragraphs of this conclusion, any serious effort to improve Arabs' views of the West should simultaneously target the four following challenges, which reflect the four main factors shaping the Occidental discourses studied by this thesis:

- (1) The first challenge is to work to improve Western foreign policies toward the Muslim world. This is because the writers studied consistently saw Western foreign policies as a source of negative views about the West.
- (2) Spreading democracy and fighting authoritarianism and tyranny in the Arab and Muslim worlds should help improve the West's image by giving Arab and Muslim intellectuals the freedom to study and criticize the circumstances of their societies instead of diverting most of their attention to criticizing the West.
- (3) The Arab masses in general and the Muslim masses in particular need to be educated about the social and cultural values of the West. In this regard, the study shows that Arabs tend to see the West negatively at the social and moral levels.



- (4) Spreading an image of reform as a gradual, evolutionary, educational process should help to improve the way Arabs view the West and Westerners. This kind of view should help Arabs appreciate more the West as a model for reform at many levels.

Second, I recommend using the four policy recommendations outlined above to evaluate the major policy approaches implemented by Western governments in the post-9/11 era to improve their relations with the Arab world. As examples, I would suggest the following:

- The US administration's efforts to promote democracy in the Arab world should be encouraged. Such efforts, if they succeed, should give Arab intellectuals more opportunity to study and criticize their own circumstances freely instead of focusing most of their attention on criticizing the West because of their inability to focus on the internal problems of their societies. However, such efforts should be mixed with a serious and intense effort to educate Arabs about reform as a gradual, educational process. This is because pushing for change as a value in itself can lead some Arab groups to attempt to bring reform through violent means. This leads me to the following recommendation.

- There is an urgent need to promote a view of healthy reform as a gradual, education, internal, non-violent process. This can happen through the new Arabic Radio and TV stations launched by the US administration after 9/11, through writings and educational seminars, and through US officials' meetings with Arab and Muslim groups. In this regard, the US should highlight the difference between change that can lead to negative or positive, peaceful or violent, permanent or temporary results and between

reform that should start from inside by transforming Arabs' understanding of their circumstances in a positive way that should lead to more fruitful, peaceful, and permanent results. Seeking change as a value in itself could lead to catastrophic results. Only reform that is based on educating and transforming large segments of Arab societies can lead to more peaceful and prosperous Arab realities and to improving Arab perceptions of the West.

- The US should put more resources and efforts into educating the Arab world about the moral and social values of the American people. Putting too much emphasis on the political and economic aspects of the relationship between America and the Arab world is not sufficient. Instead, the United States should use its communication channels with the Arab world to educate Arabs about the social and moral values of the American people. In this regard, America should not seek to present itself as a perfect nation, as all human societies have their weaknesses. However, America should highlight its diversity, multi-culturalism, work ethic, freedoms, and many other major values.

- The US should not delay dealing with major issues affecting its relationship with the Arab world, especially the Arab-Israeli peace process. Delaying the peace process does not serve America's interests and will not improve its image.

- Finally, the US should abstain from any policy similar to the invasion of Iraq in 2003 for the following reasons. The invasion of an Arab country will lead Arabs to perceive America as a colonial power in the same way they perceived the European colonial powers. Such perceptions are deeply rooted in the Arab mind. They are also a universal source of negative perception for the majority of Arabs, even the most pro-

Western among them. Second, invasion and other forms of radical violent change push Arab groups to believe in radicalism and violence as tools for reform. Such beliefs, as explained before, should lead to anti-Western views and delay real reform.

*Before concluding this thesis*, I would urge students and scholars of Arab Occidentalism to investigate further the roots of Arab Occidentalism. There is a need to study and compare the Occidental views of more thinkers to understand fully the various dimensions of Egyptian and Arab Occidentalism. There is also a need to study the Occidental views of more Arab writers who lived at various times to be able to gain better understanding of the various aspects of Arab Occidentalism.

In addition, there is a major need to study other sources of Occidental views and discourse, especially governments, mass media organizations, and religious institutions. This is because any common discourse depends on a variety of resources and support to spread. Governments, religious and educational institutions, and mass media organizations are all contributors to the discourse. They are capable of spreading certain Occidental discourses more than single thinkers can. Therefore, there is a need to study the Occidental discourses developed by such organizations in Arab societies in order to develop a better understanding of Arab Occidentalism. I personally hope to pursue such research in the future.

*Finally*, although it may be difficult to determine how much influence Jamal Al-Din Al-Afghani, Qasim Amin, and Abd Al-Rahman Al-Kawakibi, have on Arab

Occidentalism today, it is important to note that the three writers were more open to learning from the West than many of today's Arab and Muslim intellectuals. In this regard, they rejected the idea that a religious war existed between Islam and the West; and they encouraged their readers to learn from the West at the intellectual and political levels. On the other hand, they reflected some of the same negative images that Arabs have about the West today. In this regard, the three writers saw the Western individual as selfish, materialistic, and less kind. They did not have an appreciation of Western societies at the moral and social levels. In addition, some of them, especially Afghani, opened the door to using religion as a tool to agitate Muslims against the West. At the end of this study, I hope that readers and researchers alike can help promote the positive Occidental views adopted by Afghani, Qasim Amin, and Kawakibi and at the same time can help change negative views through the approaches their writings suggest.

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